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**Mission Infrastructure Development in the Canadian North,  
c. 1850-1920**

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Thesis submitted for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Architecture

The University of Edinburgh

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### **Declaration of Own Work**

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented I entirely my own.

Emily Elizabeth Turner





## Abstract

This thesis explores the development of missionary infrastructure in the Canadian north between approximately 1850 and 1915 and its impact on the evangelization of northern indigenous people by missionary organizations. Focussing on two groups of missionaries—the Catholic Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Anglican Church Missionary Society—this thesis demonstrates how missionaries used buildings to develop a programme for evangelization based on the convert and civilize model prevalent in nineteenth-century global missions. It argues that the intent was to convert indigenous people to Christianity and to enact significant changes on their traditional way of life, including their economy and social structure. Within this programme, architectural spaces, specifically the mission station, were used as a frontier location where indigenous people and missionaries interacted, providing a location for missionary teaching, a didactic place to demonstrate how Christians lived, and a method of transforming what was viewed as a non-Christian wilderness into a Christian ‘garden’ through construction of buildings and control of the natural world.

While these ideas were applied to diverse locations throughout the global mission field in the early modern period of missionary activity, the Canadian north presents a unique area of study for this topic because of the relative lack of pre-existing non-indigenous development in the region, the difficulties in building resulting from its environment, and the romantic approach that missionaries took to it as the frontier of European and Christian activity—in biblical terms, the “uttermost ends of the earth.” Within this context, the use of architecture as part of a missionary programme of conversion and civilization became extremely important as a tool for the transformation of the land and its people to a Christian ideal rooted in European precedent. This proved problematic because of the inherent difficulties in evangelization in this geographic region. As a result, this thesis demonstrates how missionaries applied architecture within the mission station as a tool for evangelization in this region, taking into consideration both

the way in which they perceived the territory and the realities they faced on the ground. It reveals how these missionaries created a unique set of architectures that responded to how missionaries understood building function within the missionary environment, as well as what was actually achievable in the northern mission field.

## Lay Summary

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Catholic and Anglican missionaries entered the Canadian north to evangelize indigenous people. In order to do so, they erected buildings in mission stations across the region to serve as bases for their work. The structures they built provided an important space for them to work, but it also had wider implications with regard to the way in which they approached both indigenous people and the landscape around them. This thesis examines the role of architecture in missionary practice in the Canadian Arctic between approximately 1850 and 1920 and discusses how architecture was used as a tool for converting indigenous people to Christianity and in changing their culture through a model of evangelism known as “convert and civilize.” In this context, architecture provided a practice space for missionaries to work in a region with very little European infrastructure, but it also became a didactic tool to demonstrate how missionaries believed Christians lived and worshiped and a method for controlling the wilderness that missionaries perceived the northern environment to be through cultivation and the establishment of centres where they believed settlement could take place.

This use of architecture took place in other areas of the global mission field throughout the nineteenth century, but northern Canada provides a unique environment to examine how architecture was used as part of mission because of the lack of pre-existing European infrastructure, the difficulty in building in remote locations with limited resources, and the romantic view that missionaries took of the northern part of the North American continent during the nineteenth century. Within this context, architecture took on a very important role in the transformation of the land and indigenous people to a Christian ideal rooted in European precedent and culture. This idea was problematic because the north did not adapt well to cultivation and settlement. As a result, this thesis demonstrates how missionaries used architecture to respond to this context, taking into account how they viewed the territory and the realities they faced on the ground. It discusses how they created a unique set of architecture within their mission stations that responded to their ideas about how

buildings functioned as part of mission and to the local environment and the conditions in which they found themselves.

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*Dawson City Museum, 1996.36.24, courtesy of Archives Deschâtelets-NDC, fonds Deschâtelets*

**8.18:** St. Mary's Catholic Church, Dawson, 1901  
*Yukon Archives, 4715 2319*

**8.19:** Interior of St. Mary's Church, Dawson, c.1910  
*Dawson City Museum, 1984.147.1*

**8.20:** W.P. Skilling, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Dawson, 1901  
*Author's photo*

**8.21:** Thomas W. Fuller, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Dawson City, Yukon, 1902.  
*Author's photo*

**8.22:** St. Paul's Anglican Church, Dawson, interior  
*Author's photo*

**8.23:** Federal Day School, Dawson, c.1901  
*Dawson City Museum, 1962.7.76*

**8.24:** "Original Good Samaritan Hospital", c.1899  
*Dawson City Museum, 1994.259.27*

**8.25:** Fort Selkirk School-Chapel, 1892  
*Author's photo*

**8.26:** Fort Selkirk Rectory, 1893  
*Author's photo*

**8.27:** St. Andrew's Anglican Church, 1931



*Author's photo*

**8.28:** St. Francis-Xavier Catholic Church, 1898

*Author's photo*

**8.29:** Carcross Mission House

*Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7517-232*

**8.30:** St. Saviour's Church, Carcross

*Author's photo*

**8.31:** St. Barnabas' Church, Moosehide, 1908

*Author's photo*

## Introduction

*“The house of God is the chief visible sign which we are still allowed to retain God’s presence among us, and I take it to be of great importance that the heathen should be reminded by this constant memorial before their eyes that the introduction of Christianity into their country by the missionaries is a reality and more than a mere tale.”*<sup>1</sup> – William Carpenter Bompas, Bishop of Athabasca, Mackenzie and Selkirk (1875)

When William Carpenter Bompas spoke those words at the first synod of the newly-created Diocese of Athabasca, which spanned the vast majority of north-western Canada, he was the bishop of one of the largest Anglican dioceses in the world. The Church of England could claim a presence there for over two decades and yet could boast only a single church, a wooden structure completed in the early 1860s at the Hudson’s Bay Company northern depot, Fort Simpson; they did, however, possess a

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<sup>1</sup> William Carpenter Bompas, “Address at the First Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca,” quoted in H.A. Cody, *An Apostle of the North: Memoirs of Bishop W.C. Bompas* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1908), 185.

much larger collection of mission houses and schools throughout the new diocese.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Bompas saw architecture as an integral aspect of missionary activity in northern Canada during the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, two groups of missionaries entered into western Canada at the Red River Settlement, with the aim of converting indigenous people throughout the Northwest to Christianity. The first group, consisting of two secular priests and a seminarian from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Québec, arrived at Red River in 1818; they were eventually replaced by the missionary order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), in 1845.<sup>3</sup> In 1820, the Church of England also entered the field, in the form of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the evangelical arm of the Church's missionary programme.<sup>4</sup>

The missions of the CMS and OMI gradually expanded throughout the vast territory administered by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the chartered company which controlled the fur trade throughout much of North America; although technically part of the British Empire, the imperial government had little immediate influence there,

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<sup>2</sup> "North-West America Mission," *CMI* 1 (1876): 43-46.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and Métis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 12; 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> T.C. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies: A History of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land and its Diocese from 1820-1950* (Toronto: Ryerson University Press, 1962), xv.

leaving its affairs to the commercially-focussed HBC.<sup>5</sup> The west, today's Prairie provinces, although initially remote and little explored, quickly gave way to European settlement, especially after Canadian Confederation in 1867 and the transfer of those territories to the government from the HBC in 1870, and missionaries spent significant amounts of time and energy navigating the difficult territory between increasing white settlement and the evangelism of indigenous people.<sup>6</sup> The north, however, was and remained a very different field of operations.

The northern work of the two missionary organizations extended into the present-day provinces and territories, a massive territory stretching from the Alaskato Labrador, through drainage systems of the Slave, Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers to the Arctic and Hudson Bay coasts.<sup>7</sup> From 1850 to the turn of the twentieth century, missionaries focused heavily on this vast region which was, in the minds of both organizations, in

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<sup>5</sup> John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869* (New York: Octagon, 1977), 3; Stephen R. Brown, *Merchant Kings: When Companies Ruled the World, 1600-1900* (London: Conway, 2010), 218.

<sup>6</sup> John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 143-66; Donat Levasseur, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans L'Ouest et le Nord du Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995), 189.

<sup>7</sup> Traditionally, the geographic definition of the North in Canada denotes the territories above the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel. While this has some merit with regard to the study of the contemporary territories, it is not a helpful geographic division in historical context. The "north" was a much wider and less-defined areas that encompassed the Arctic and Sub-Arctic climactic regions and, remained primarily a frontier zone inhabited primarily by indigenous people, fur traders, and, eventually, missionaries throughout most of the nineteenth century. For a general background, see William R. Morrison, *True North: The Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Kenneth Coates, *Canada's Colonies: A History of the Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 1985).

desperate need of evangelization.<sup>8</sup> It also presented few of the difficulties of evangelization in settler colonies, although it certainly possessed its own.

Evangelization necessarily focussed on the conversion of First Nations people to Christianity. Missionaries travelled throughout the region, learning local languages, preaching their message and providing the educational and medical services traditionally associated with missionary activity.<sup>9</sup> As they established a presence in the region, they also constructed mission stations: collections of buildings in which to live and bases from which to conduct their work. These stations, usually comprised of multiple structures, formed a central point for mission work and were themselves integral to the continued process of evangelism throughout the north, as both practical and symbolic built spaces on the landscape.

Generally, when studying religious architecture, church buildings take a central role in the discussion as a sacred space separated stylistically, ideologically and practically from the secular space of the community. However, mission stations, which, when fully established, contained a range of structures including churches, schools, houses and auxiliary buildings, did not just place importance on their house of worship, although, it

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<sup>8</sup> For an overview of missionary expansion throughout this region, see Grant, *Wintertime*, 96-118.

<sup>9</sup> For a summary of mission work in general in the north, see: Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847-1921* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995); Frank Peake, "From Red River to the Arctic: Essays in Anglican Missionary Expansion," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 31, no. 1 (1989): 1-171.

was a central aspect of the mission community. Rather, mission stations established in North America, and elsewhere, during the nineteenth century functioned as unified wholes, where Christian work extended beyond worship alone, into the realms of education, medical care and everyday life; each building performed vital individual functions, as well as working together to create a complex from which evangelization could be conducted, integral to the missionary programme.

It was this collection of buildings that formed the built space of Christian work in the Canadian north and performed a vital role in the transmission of the Christian message. Architecture in OMI and CMS missions performed practical functions in the creation of space for mission activities, and therefore formed an important role in mission work; however, this was not their only role. Built space also performed a symbolic and instructive role, promoting the Christian message and acting as a reinforcement of Christian values and ideals, effectively becoming an active agent in missionary work.<sup>10</sup> The architecture of mission was not just practical space, but, rather, an integral aspect of missionary work as it promoted, forwarded and reinforced the various aspects of their programme through the inculcation of values and ideas associated with nineteenth-century Christianity through its design, planning and construction as the material extension of European and Christian influence in the non-European world.

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<sup>10</sup> Carroll Van West, "Acculturation by Design: Architectural Determinism and the Montana Indian Reservations, 1870-1930," *Great Plains Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (1987): 93; Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1:33; Grant, *Wintertime*, 170-71; Huel, *Proclaiming*, 123.

In the north, this role was particularly profound. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was a region that was little explored and virtually unknown outside the limited number of Europeans, including HBC employees, missionaries and explorers, a remote frontier far from the centres of power of the British Empire, yet important to imperial projects as a region of heroic exploration and sublime romance.<sup>11</sup> Perceived as a vast and icy wilderness with few elements of European life, including buildings, it was, from an architectural perspective, severely lacking, as, missionary architecture notwithstanding, the only built spaces in the region were the highly utilitarian forts of the HBC and transitory architectural forms of indigenous people. Contrasting directly to these pre-existing forms of architecture in their construction, layout and function, the erection of buildings for missions demarcated a zone of contact between missionaries and local people, as well as with the land itself. Responding to the isolation, remoteness and harshness of the Arctic and Sub-Arctic environment in which they were situated, the architecture of northern missions reinforced Christian values, behaviours and beliefs by attempting to transform the land and its people through the creation of centres of “civilized”, Christian life. This position of architecture as an effective agent in mission was also consistent across denominational lines, pointing to the pervasiveness of the role of built space in Christian mission. Despite the CMS and OMI placing different

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<sup>11</sup>Janice Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative: Arctic Exploration in British Print Culture, 1818-1860* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 36; Robert G. David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 2.

emphasis on the planning, construction and style of spaces to suit their own theological and strategic emphases, architecture nevertheless remained an integral aspect of both evangelical programmes.

Evangelization in the nineteenth century, both in North America and throughout the larger global mission field, was not a straightforward transmission of the Gospel but was often rather a complex process of cultural change based in Christian theology, European ideology and cultural practice.<sup>12</sup> The majority of missionaries were, effectively, transmitting a form of Christianity that derived from European precedent, despite desires in some circles to build indigenous-driven and indigenous-centred churches which developed with regard to local precedent and culture.<sup>13</sup> The architecture of the two missionary organizations examined here was no exception. Buildings were generally planned and erected based on a set of preconceived European ideas concerning what architecture was and how it should function, in both a European setting and abroad, integrating missions in remote regions of northern Canada into larger debates regarding the role of architecture in the global Christian community.

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<sup>12</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1990), 90.

<sup>13</sup> Of particular interest to this study are the ideas of Henry Venn on the growth of indigenous churches: Peter Williams, "'Not Transplanting': Henry Venn's Strategic Vision," in *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999*, ed. Brian Stanley and Kevin Ward (Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 147-72.



However, in the frontier conditions of the Canadian north, with limited access to resources and labour, as well as a small and scattered population, the buildings erected for missions were necessarily modified from their ideal forms. The goals of the missionaries with regard to the development of physical infrastructure were not entirely realized as they faced the realities of the environment in which they found themselves. Nevertheless, the desire to create European space acting in a multitude of roles as physical and material agents shaped the development of missionary expansion throughout the second half of the nineteenth century in the Canadian north. Here familiar forms were erected in an alien landscape as both representatives and agents of the beliefs, ideas and values of the nineteenth-century European world.

### *Missions in the Nineteenth-Century*

Understanding the role of architecture in the north involves the understanding of the organizations and people involved, as well as the goals and practices of nineteenth-century evangelism. The mission field was dominated by the CMS and OMI. Both organizations entered the north around 1850 and remained well into the twentieth century, shaping the development of the Christian church throughout the region, as they expanded and consolidated their operations in the second half of the nineteenth

century.<sup>14</sup> These were not the first missionary organizations that operated in present-day Canada where there had been a long history of missions dating back to Jesuit missions in New France in the mid-seventeenth century. At the same time, Russian Orthodox missionaries had maintained a presence in western Alaska since the 1790s. The missions operated by the CMS and OMI, however, were unique in the northern geography and their expansive range stretching from Labrador to Alaska.

Although operating concurrently in the same field, the theological and ecclesiological backgrounds of these two organizations were very different. The CMS, founded in 1799, was the evangelical missionary organization associated with the Church of England and espoused a theology focussing on the primacy of the Gospel in the understanding of truth and personal salvation while retaining faith in the episcopal structure and heritage of the English Church. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Society developed a wide network of missions throughout the globe, primarily in British colonies and territorial holdings with heavy emphasis on Africa and Asia.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to their High Anglican counterpart, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), which worked primarily in settler colonies, the CMS made work amongst non-Europeans in

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<sup>14</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 15; Gaston Carrière, “L’Œuvre des Oblats de Marie-Immaculée dans le Nord Canadien Oriental,” in *Le Nouveau Québec : Contribution à l’Étude de l’Occupation Humaine*, ed. Jean Malaurie and Jacques Rousseau (Paris : Mouton and Co., 1964), 396.

<sup>15</sup> Hans Cnattingius, *Bishops and Societies: A Study of Anglican Colonial and Missionary Expansion, 1698-1850* (London: SPCK, 1952), 231; Hilary M. Carey, *God’s Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c. 1801-1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 150-52.

remote and exotic locations a central aspect of both its mandate and identity.<sup>16</sup> The conversion of indigenous people abroad was the CMS' primary function, but the North American field was on the periphery of its operations.

The Oblates, on the other hand, were a French Catholic missionary organization whose ultramontane ecclesiology focussed on Catholic tradition and ritual, giving supremacy to papal authority over any allegiance to a temporal state, a stance which solidified its belief in a single universal Christianity under the guidance of Rome. The order was founded in 1816 by Eugène de Mazenod as the Missionnaires de Provence, providing home ministry to the poor and illiterate population of rural Provence. Their first foreign mission did not begin until 1841 when four priests and two lay brothers were sent from France to Montréal.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the second half of the century, they expanded globally, with establishments in Texas, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Australia, amongst others, but not on the same scale as that of the CMS or of other Catholic missionary organizations, such as the Jesuits.<sup>18</sup> Throughout the century, the Canadian missions

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<sup>16</sup> Stephan S. Maughan, *Mighty England Do Good: Culture, Faith, Empire and World in the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1850-1915* (Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2014), 75; Joseph Hardwick, *An Anglican British World: The Church of England and the Expansion of the Settler Empire, c.1790-1860* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014): 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> Martha McCarthy, "The Missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to the Athapaskans: Theory, Structure and Method," PhD diss., University of Manitoba (1981), 58; Eugène de Mazenod, "Règlements et Statuts de la Congrégation de la Jeunesse Chrétienne," *Missions* 37 (1899): 25.

<sup>18</sup> See for example, *Missions* 26 (1883), where articles appear on the full range of the Oblates' missions.

were the Oblates' primary foreign mission, even as they built their identity as "specialists in difficult missions"<sup>19</sup> in North America and elsewhere.

As a result of working in the same mission field with a fairly small population, the CMS and OMI were in fierce competition throughout both western and northern Canada.<sup>20</sup> The ecumenical attitude towards other Protestant organizations by the CMS in other mission field, such as the London Missionary Society (LMS), did not apply to Catholics, and the OMI was similarly non-conciliatory; Catholics, especially French Catholics, were viewed as a foreign enemy by the CMS from both a nationalistic and denominational perspective.<sup>21</sup> In Canada, the north was their primary battleground for territory and souls in what Canadian historian John Webster Grant has called "the race to the northern sea."<sup>22</sup> Here both the CMS and OMI fought to outpace each other to establish missions between 1850 and the end of the century. This fierce rivalry was underpinned by the incredible importance placed by these organizations on winning converts and offering them salvation. This resulted in a rapid expansion of their spheres of influence, along with the erection of a significant amount of infrastructure to serve

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<sup>19</sup> Jean Leplon, *Eugene de Mazenod: Évêque de Marseille, Fondateur des Missionnaires Oblates de Marie Immaculée, 1782-1861*, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1957), 3:167. "...spécialistes des missions difficiles."

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Craig Mishler, "Missionaries in Collision: Anglicans and Oblates Among the Gwich'in, 1861-65," *Arctic* 43, no. 2(1990): 121-26; Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 141-65.

<sup>21</sup> Maughan, *Mighty England*, 88; Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, 1897-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 174.

<sup>22</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 96.

their respective needs and consolidate their positions throughout the large and sparsely-populated territory.

The desire to win the souls of northern Canada's indigenous people was part of the larger, global missionary movement of the long nineteenth century. Evangelism was, and remains, a central aspect of Christian theology, stemming from Christ's so-called Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 to spread his teachings and "make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19 NRSV). The nineteenth century, however, was a particularly intense period of missionary expansion, as Christian organizations in Europe competed to win converts from non-Christian indigenous people across the globe in a rush of millenarian urgency.

The global missionary movement had roots across Europe but was particularly poignant in Britain where missionary expansion went hand in hand with British imperial expansion during the nineteenth century, as the expansion of the Spanish Empire in the Americas had contributed to the growth of Catholic missions from the fifteenth century onwards.<sup>23</sup> The growth of Britain's empire had a number of important implications. On one hand, contact with increasing numbers of indigenous peoples led to greater awareness of non-Europeans and missionary activity among the British public, who

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<sup>23</sup> Andrew Porter, "Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20 (1992): 371.

looked increasingly to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the subjects of empire.<sup>24</sup> In particular, the impact of the slave trade and treatment of indigenous people by colonial and commercial powers was concerning to many, especially evangelicals who saw it as a Christian duty to spread the benefits of Christian life and to extend humanitarian aid to those regions.<sup>25</sup>

The expansion of the British Empire also lent an aspect of Providence to this enterprise: Britain had the infrastructure to allow missions to expand and many evangelicals viewed it as the duty of the churches to respond.<sup>26</sup> This understanding contributed to the urgent expansion of missionary work throughout the nineteenth century. Missions were romanticised as heroic undertakings as well as a duty toward those unblessed by Christian teaching, with many rushing to respond.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted, however, that while missionary organizations actively used the infrastructure, resources and contacts within the Empire, this did not automatically translate into support for the policy and practice of the imperial agenda.<sup>28</sup> In fact, many missionaries saw themselves as righting the wrongs of Empire through the “gift” of Christianity, and its associated humanitarian

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<sup>24</sup> Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 58.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Porter, “An Overview, 1700-1914,” in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 64.

<sup>26</sup> Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in the United Kingdom, 1815-1914* (Harlow: Pearson, 2008), 196; Andrew Porter, *Religion Versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 40-43; Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 68.

<sup>27</sup> Jeffery Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise Since 1700* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 60.

<sup>28</sup> Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 68.

work, which often involved opposing colonial governments to secure indigenous rights and land claims, often against unsympathetic or disinterested settler populations.<sup>29</sup> These attitudes towards the responsibility of Christians to spread the gospel were also found amongst non-British and Catholic groups although their connection to empire was certainly not the same, nor were the strategies and rhetoric they employed.

The missionary zeal of the period manifested itself in the creation of a range of Protestant missionary societies, of which the CMS was but one. These associations were voluntary and generally subscription-funded, reflecting the wider interest in evangelism present during the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> Catholic missions, such as those of the Oblates, were primarily undertaken by religious orders, as in the previous several centuries. These were diverse and numerous, including old religious orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits, alongside more newly-formed groups, including the Oblates. But these nineteenth-century missions took on a new character: not only were they more widely publicized and popular amongst the general population in Catholic countries, they were significantly less tied to imperial projects. Whereas older missions, including the mid-seventeenth-century Jesuit mission to Huronia in New France, were intimately linked to the imperial projects of Catholic nations, nineteenth-century missions often operated outside of Catholic zones of influence, reflecting the growth

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<sup>29</sup> Catherine Hall, "'From Greenland's Icy Mountains...To Afric's Golden Sand': Ethnicity, Race and Nation in Mid-Nineteenth Century England," *Gender and History* 5, no. 2 (1993): 225; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:78; McCarthy, *Great River*, 73.

<sup>30</sup> Cox, *Missionary Enterprise*, 73-75.

ultramontanism within the church which saw Rome, and not the imperial state, as the centre from which they drew their mandate and support.<sup>31</sup> Missions established in places such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and northern Canada were outside imperial influences of Catholic countries, yet the perceived importance of converting all non-Christian populations made this issue spiritually unimportant.

Non-British missionary organizations, like their British counterparts, often operated within their respective empire's sphere of influence. Yet, as has been noted with regard to the Catholic examples above, this was not always the case. Similarly, while missionaries, especially British ones, tended to expand their spheres of influence alongside their imperial counterparts, there were exceptions. In some remote areas where the imperial powers held little sway, such as the South Pacific, certain missionary organizations took on the role of explorers to spreading their message independently and attempting to disseminate the Gospel to the most remote regions in the known world.<sup>32</sup> While northern Canada was officially a British sphere of influence, imperial government held only limited sway in practical terms and missionaries saw themselves in the role of missionary-explorers opening up new areas of the globe for Christianization.

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<sup>31</sup> Carey, *God's Empire*, 120.

<sup>32</sup> John Barker, "Where the Missionary Frontier Ran Ahead of Empire," in *Missions and Empire*, 86.



At its most basic, the role of missionary societies abroad was the conversion of non-Christian people to Christianity. However, missionaries also performed other functions, especially with regard to humanitarian work, including medical and educational work in correspondence with the charitable activities undertaken by the church at home.<sup>33</sup> These auxiliary functions were clear and articulated goals of mission and were fairly consistent across the global mission field.

Conversion to Christianity, however, was not the only aspect of the missionary agenda. With certain exceptions, many nineteenth-century missionaries pursued an agenda known in contemporary scholarship as “Christianity and civilization”. This was the idea of Christian conversion combined with the transformation of the lifestyle of converts to one that reflected European social and cultural norms.<sup>34</sup> Dandeson Coates, Secretary of the CMS in the 1830s, stated that “civilization [is] intended to mean the moral and social improvement of a people.”<sup>35</sup> Effectively, civilization would enact changes in the social order of a society in order to inculcate European values of civility, industry, and order which were seen as impossible to attain in a state of so-called “savagery”. In the missionary mind, there was a direct dichotomy between a Christian life, characterized by

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<sup>33</sup> Porter, “Overview,” 64.

<sup>34</sup> Sara H. Sohmer, “Christianity Without Civilization: Anglican Sources for an Alternative Nineteenth Century Mission Methodology,” *Journal of Religious History* 18 (1994): 174-75; Brian Stanley, “Christianity and Civilization in English Evangelical Mission Thought, 1792-1857,” in *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, ed. Brian Stanley (London: Routledge, 2001), 170; Porter, *Religion*, 93.

<sup>35</sup> Dandeson Coates. John Beecham and William Ellis, *Christianity the Means of Civilization: Shown in the Evidence Given before a Committee of the House of Commons on Aborigines* (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1837), 99.

sedentary, regimented labour, and a “heathen” life, which they saw as marked by a tendency towards idleness, laziness and vice.<sup>36</sup> The idea of civilization was, in many ways, the outward expression of conversion through a radical change in lifestyle which demonstrated true conversion, often illustrated through the adoption of European dress.<sup>37</sup>

This reorienting of indigenous culture and lifestyle towards European norms focussed on individual and societal values which missionaries saw as integral to Christian life as well as gendered domestic roles within the traditional European family unit. However, the most overt mark of civilization was the adoption of a sedentary agricultural lifestyle, popularly known as “the Bible and the Plough”, where agriculture became the mark of a successful Christian community.<sup>38</sup> Agriculture not only embodied Christian values, but the sedentary community of pastoral labourers reflected an idealized vision of Christian society focussed around work and faith in a self-sufficient community.<sup>39</sup> This vision was based on European precedent, but not nineteenth-century industrialism; rather, it harked back to the romanticised medieval past which was often seen as the epitome of

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<sup>36</sup> Mark Francis, “The ‘Civilizing’ of Indigenous People in Nineteenth Century Canada,” *Journal of World History* 9, no. 1(1998): 71; James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 44.

<sup>37</sup> Gunson, *Messengers*, 276.

<sup>38</sup> J.B. Webster, “The Bible and the Plough,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, no. 4 (1963): 418.

<sup>39</sup> Malcolm Falloon, *To Plough or To Preach: Mission Strategies in New Zealand during the 1820s* (London: Latimer Trust, 2010), 8; Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, “Christianity and Colonization in South Africa,” *American Ethnologist* 13 (1986): 12.

European society and the highpoint of church influence on people's everyday lives.<sup>40</sup>

The type of "civilization" missionaries hoped to impart, based on the creation of agricultural settlements of converted Christians, explicitly focused on social, cultural and economic change. In general, Catholic missionaries had a tendency to emphasize this strategy less overtly than their Protestant counterparts but it was, on the ground, still practiced as they expected new converts to replace their traditional culture with European social and economic norms.<sup>41</sup>

Newly-civilized Christian agriculturalists necessarily required farms and settlements in which to live and work. In places such as pre-contact North America where there was little in the way of cultivation as Europeans understood it, the introduction of a new settlement and economic model required a re-ordering of the landscape and, effectively, the creation of a Christian world based on agricultural production and villages in which Christians could live, work and worship together.<sup>42</sup> In the north, where the economy was based primarily on hunting, fishing, and trapping, this was a major shift in how missionaries expected converts to live and behave. Missionaries' vision of civilization extended to the environment in which their new and potential converts lived which was seen as the environment of "heathen", not Christian, society; true conversion

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<sup>40</sup> For an overview of medievalism, see Michael Alexander, *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>41</sup> Norman Etherington, "The Missionary Experience in British and French Empires," in *In God's Empire: French Missionaries in the Modern World*, ed. Owen White and J.P. Daughton, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 280; McCarthy, *Great River*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 234-35.

and civilization involved a radical change in space to one that reflected Christian values and societal structure.<sup>43</sup> If conversion was a reconstruction of the non-Christian worldview, then the process of “civilization” was a reconstruction of the European world in a non-European context. The convert and civilize approach, in short, required a spiritual transformation as well as a temporal one that affected lifestyle, land use and infrastructure development as traditional lifestyles were expected to give way to Christian villages with an agricultural economy.

The word mission, however, can be applied not just to the act of evangelization, but also to the physical space that missionaries occupied: the mission station. At the heart of this civilizing agenda, the mission station and its architecture formed a central aspect of the nineteenth-century mission programme, as both a base of operations and a point of contact for the growth of a civilized Christian community. It was often deliberately set in contrast to the surrounding landscape, through its extensive employment of European cultivation techniques and architectural styles, and thus seen not only as a beacon of Christianity and civilized society, but also for continued evangelism.<sup>44</sup> It was also intended to form the nucleus of future, Christian communities. This model was all but consistently applied across both Protestant and Catholic missions, as they saw it as a

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<sup>43</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:108; Francis, “Indigenous People,” 87.

<sup>44</sup> Jean Usher “The Long Slumbering Offspring of Adam: The Evangelical Approach to the Tsimshian,” *Anthropologica* 13 (1971), 56; Fiona Vernal, “‘A Truly Christian Village’: The Farmerfield Mission as a Novel Turn in Methodist Evangelical Strategies, Eastern Cape, South Africa, 1838-1883,” *South African Historical Journal* 61, no.2 (2009): 413.

vital tool to help enact the changes deemed necessary to the lives—both temporal and spiritual—of potential converts.

This convert and civilize strategy, despite its widespread application throughout the nineteenth-century global mission field, was not homogeneously applied. While all non-Christian cultures were seen as needing to be converted on a societal level, the diversity of these cultures effectively meant that not all regions were to be converted through the “Bible and the Plough.” Missionary organizations faced particular difficulties in regions such as India and China where developed urban cultures with pre-existing agricultural and economic structures did not align with ideas pervasive in nineteenth-century European discourse of the “noble savage” in need of basic instruction; these communities were seen to be in need of integral transformation but their technical cultures were such that introducing basic cultivation and construction practice did not make sense.<sup>45</sup> The divide between so-called “developed” cultures and their “primitive” counterparts was outlined by Robert Machray, Bishop of Rupert’s Land, in 1878, who made it clear that “civilizing” different types of indigene was not the same enterprise.<sup>46</sup> As a result, “those great countries of heathen culture,” specifically on the Indian

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<sup>45</sup> Andrew Porter, “Commerce and Christianity: The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth Century Missionary Slogan,” *This Historical Journal* 28 (1985): 612; Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 159.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Machray, “The Present Opportunities for Carrying the Gospel into the Heathen World,” *CMI* 4 (1879): 196.

subcontinent and other parts of Asia, were treated differently to those where there were “uncivilized heathen”<sup>47</sup>, namely North America, the Pacific and Africa.

This divide was made based on the perceived level of civilization of a given group of non-Christians, measured against European standards. The idea of a ladder of civilization, with Christian Europeans occupying the upper echelons and non-Christian nomads at the bottom, was highly pervasive during the nineteenth century and allowed missionaries to classify indigenous people among whom they worked.<sup>48</sup> Assessments were generally made based on settlement patterns and technical knowledge in European crafts, as well as literacy. Those in urban, architecturally, and agriculturally-developed societies may have been considered both “barbarians” and “heathens”, but could also not be classified as the romanticised trope of the primitive “noble savage”, despite their vast cultural differences with missionaries.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, North American indigenous people, alongside those in Africa and the Pacific, were generally seen as being in a childlike state without basic technical knowledge or skills, because their cultures were generally non-urban and transmitted ideas and history orally, as opposed

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<sup>47</sup> Machray, “Gospel,” 196. On this debate more generally, see H.H. Montgomery, *Mankind and the Church* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907).

<sup>48</sup> C.A. Bayly, “The British and Indigenous Peoples, 1760-1860: Power, Perception and Identity,” in *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850*, ed. Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (London: University College London Press, 1999), 35.

<sup>49</sup> Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 115; Gunson, *Messengers*, 97-98.

to in writing.<sup>50</sup> These ideas were also applied to religion, where indigenous people in North America, the Pacific and Africa were often seen as having no religious beliefs whatsoever, while Hindus and Muslims, for example, were perceived as being inherently wrong in their belief and practices, but possessed of organized religion nonetheless.

Similarly, the natural environment impacted mission strategy. Contact within the context of an exotic and romantic frontier, such as the South Pacific, generally lead to greater contrast being drawn between European and local culture, just as the landscape itself was contrasted with that of Europe to show the dichotomy between the “civilized” west and the “heathen” frontier.<sup>51</sup> These remote edges of European influence were generally seen as being in need of the greatest transformation, spiritually and culturally. The transformation of a so-called developed, yet still non-Christian, culture in a settled landscape was a vastly different project than the transformation of people who Europeans often viewed as childlike and with limited technical knowledge in a remote setting.

Effectively, this divide meant that the application of the agricultural settlement model was limited to fields with so-called “primitive heathens”, specifically North America, Africa and the Pacific where subduing the land through agriculture brought the

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<sup>50</sup> Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 117.

<sup>51</sup> Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific in the Wake of the Cook Voyages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 211-12.

inhabitants into the fold of the civilized, Christian world.<sup>52</sup> There were exceptions within Asia and the Indian subcontinent where this model was also looked to, but the civilization and conversion of non-Christian people on what was seen as the edge of the known world proceeded with the goal of putting in place physical infrastructure and an agricultural economy to radically transform people and their environment.

The missions to the Canadian north were certainly operating on the edge of the British imperial world. This region was nearly unknown to the vast majority of the European public, except through the accounts of Arctic explorers and, to a much lesser extent, the Hudson's Bay Company.<sup>53</sup> Arctic exploration in search of the elusive Northwest Passage, as well as for scientific and geographic study, had shaped a view of the region as remote, inhospitable and distant from Europe, both geographically and in its climactic and environmental features. Consumed primarily through print media, the north, an ill-defined geographic region including the Canadian Arctic and Sub-Arctic, was constructed in the European imagination as a vast wasteland of ice, spatially and ideologically remote from the known world.<sup>54</sup> The push for exploration into this region created an ever-moving frontier as Europeans penetrated further into the region.

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<sup>52</sup> A.A. Den Otter, *Civilizing the Wilderness: Culture and Nature in Pre-Confederation Canada and Rupert's Land* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), 4.

<sup>53</sup> Coates, *Canada's Colonies*, 32-43.

<sup>54</sup> Coates, *Canada's Colonies*, 32; Morrison, *True North*, 50.



The frontier of empire can be defined as the moving edge of the known world and as the zone of contact between the European and non-European worlds. In the north, the frontier was the point of contact between explorers, traders and, eventually, missionaries, and indigenous people, and their often-divergent concepts of space, culture and environment; American historian Frederick Jackson Turner's influential text, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893) defined the frontier as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization,"<sup>55</sup> which is an accurate view of the Victorian view of the frontier environment. For Turner, this frontier was the American West, but in Canada, this frontier was undoubtedly the north.<sup>56</sup> The Canadian north was not the only frontier in the nineteenth-century world: the islands of the South Pacific and the interior of Africa were regarded in much the same light, although each possessed unique characteristics which defined the European approach to them.<sup>57</sup> This frontier was continually pushing forward as exploration and knowledge advanced, providing a fluid zone of contact where Europeans came in contact with indigenous people and their landscape. So too was the frontier an important concept in missions and the Arctic was regarded as a clear frontier of operations, named by Bompas as "the Ultima Thule...of Missionary Enterprise."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier Thesis in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), 3.

<sup>56</sup> Michael Cross, *The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment*, 3.

<sup>57</sup> Barker, "Missionary Frontier," 87.

<sup>58</sup> William Carpenter Bompas, *Diocese of Mackenzie River* (London: SPCK, 1888), 106.

For the CMS and OMI, the northern missionary frontier was not only a zone of contact but also of transformation. Mission provided key points of contact in regions controlled primarily by indigenous people, and as places from which transformation of both the people and the landscape could occur.<sup>59</sup> The frontier was considered both a physical location and a developmental process.<sup>60</sup> Turner discussed the frontier as band of territory between “civilization”—specifically cultivated agricultural lands—and “Indian land,”<sup>61</sup> where non-indigenous people had little or no influence over land use and economic activity; the frontier was where a change from the latter to the former was occurring. For missionaries, it was a region where “civilization” could be applied to the land and its inhabitants through evangelization and its spiritual and temporal manifestations, a process in which architecture played an integral role. The mission stations established, along with the people converted, provided areas of strength and consolidation from which missions could expand and advance the frontier. In this respect, missionaries saw themselves as the vanguard of civilizing influence in a wild and unknown region.

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<sup>59</sup> Barker, “Missionary Frontier,” 88; 99.

<sup>60</sup> Cross, *Frontier Thesis*, 1.

<sup>61</sup> Turner, *Frontier Thesis*, 3.



**Figure i.1:** *Rupert's Land* (shown in purple)

Missionaries were not, however, the only Europeans operating in the Canadian north. Besides northern explorers, transitory agents with whom missionaries had very little contact, there were also fur traders, specifically the HBC who had operated there since the early seventeenth century.<sup>62</sup> Established by royal charter in 1670, the HBC had long

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<sup>62</sup> One of the few contacts the OMI and CMS had was with John Franklin whose encouragement, both

operated monopoly rights in Rupert's Land, defined as the Hudson's Bay drainage basin (figure i.1), but their influence had spread deep into the continent by the second half of the nineteenth century, with posts from Vancouver Island in the west, north to Forts Yukon and Anderson, and east to the Ungava Peninsula.<sup>63</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, the HBC not only controlled this territory economically, but also acted as its *de facto* government, making the Company the primary factor of British influence into the Northwest. Building their commercial operations, which involved trading European goods with indigenous people in exchange for furs, the HBC established vast trade networks which provided key points of contact with the country's indigenous inhabitants and radically altering their pre-contact lifestyle by integrating European business practices and infrastructure into traditional patterns of hunting, migration and economic activity.<sup>64</sup> The HBC also provided the primary point of contact for missionaries, a relationship that was necessary, but not always positive.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the HBC's longstanding presence in the region and the undeniable influence they had on the lifestyle of the communities with whom they interacted, the Company,

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direct and indirect, led to increased interest in the evangelism of the Inuit which would eventually become an important interest of both missionary organizations. See John West to CMS, 25 October 1823, CMSA C/C1/M1; Émile Petitot, *Les Grands Esquimaux* (Paris: E. Plon, 1887).

<sup>63</sup> For a history of the HBC and the fur trade, see, for example: Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

<sup>64</sup> Arthur J. Ray, *Indians and the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 203.

<sup>65</sup> Raymond Huel, "The Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Hudson's Bay Company: A Mutuality of Interests in the Interior of the Canadian North-West," *Vie Oblate Life* 58 no. 3 (1998): 439-66; Norma Jaye Goosen, "The Relationship of the Church Missionary Society and the Hudson's Bay Company in Rupert's Land, 1821-1860," MA thesis, University of Manitoba (1974).

as a rule, had no interest in civilizing either the people or the landscape. Their work involved merely the extraction of resources, by encouraging indigenous people to trap and trade, not to adopt a sedentary agriculture lifestyle. As a result, the development of a frontier with those aims in mind was not within the scope of HBC interests.<sup>66</sup> The fur-trading frontier, although corresponding geographically to the missionary frontier, was a very different endeavour with a focus on commercial, not Christian, expansion. While supporting missionaries on some level, the HBC was not interested in the pushing of a frontier of civilization as they believed that this would be detrimental to their business model because they relied on traditional indigenous skills.<sup>67</sup> However, the physical space of the HBC post had long provided a contact point with indigenous people, in much the same way as missionaries had hoped their stations would as they established themselves throughout the north.

When examining the growth of missions and their architecture in the Canadian north, it is important to recognize the place of these missions within this historical context. The strategies employed by the missionaries in the north, although adapted to the physical and ideological conditions of the northern environment, were nevertheless part of larger, global trends in mission strategy, the approach to non-Christian indigenous people and to the built environment as an aspect of mission. The strategy of “the Bible

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<sup>66</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 187; Grant, *Wintertime*, 97-98.

<sup>67</sup> Arthur J. Thompson, “John West: A Study of the Conflict between Civilization and the Fur Trade,” *JCHS* 40 (1998): 44.

and the Plough”—civilization through the agricultural mission working in concert with conversion to Christianity—was applied throughout this region, as it was elsewhere in the global mission field. The patterns that are apparent with respect to general evangelical strategy as well as with regard to architecture, are consistent with nineteenth-century missionary practice worldwide, although uniquely suited to the frontier environment in which they found themselves.

### *Literature Review*

This thesis builds on scholarly literature and its methodologies in the fields of imperial history, architecture and religion in order to fully develop the context, role and impact of missionary infrastructure development in the North American Arctic. There has been no overall study of northern missionary architecture and this thesis fills that gap, exploring how and why missionaries used architecture as an integral aspect of evangelization.<sup>68</sup> However, there is a rich body of scholarship in related fields upon which

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<sup>68</sup> Studies of northern Canadian architecture are limited. See for example: Peter Richardson and Douglas Richardson, *Canadian Churches: An Architectural History* (Richmond Hill: Firefly, 2007), 336-39; Joan Mattie, “The Hay River Missions: St. Peter’s and St. Anne’s,” *SSAC Bulletin* 17, no. 4 (1992): 97-104; Judy Larmour, “Émile Grouard, Artist Bishop of the North: The Altar Paintings and Decoration of the Sanctuary in St. Charles Church, Dunvegan,” *SSAC Bulletin* 17, no. 4 (1992): 105-109; Gary Adams, Lori Dueck, Barry Greco and Sandra Jezik, *Rediscovering the Church of St. John of York Factory, York Factory National Historic Site of Canada* (Winnipeg: Parks Canada, 2003); Janet Wright, *Church of Our Lady of Good Hope* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1986); Marie-Josée Therrien, “Built to Educate: The Architecture of Schools in the Arctic from 1950 to 2007,” *JSSAC* 40, no. 2 (2015): 25-42; Harold Kalman, “True North,” in *A History of Canadian Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 2:677-705; Angus Sherwood, “Building in the North,”

this study draws and to which it contributes, particularly with regard to spatial concerns within narratives of European and Christian expansion. Existing research falls into two broad categories: on general level, the study of early modern missions and empire, and their connections to one another, indigenous people and the natural and built environment; and, more specifically, infrastructure development in missions and its role in the conversion of people and landscape. Because the early modern missionary was a global phenomenon, there is a significant amount of scholarship that informs this study because strategies employed elsewhere were also applied to the northern mission field.

### *Missions and Empire*

There is a growing body of scholarship on missions and empire, and their relationship with one another. Significantly, much of this scholarship examines empire and mission from its historical, rather than, contemporary geographic context, meaning that research is not bounded by present-day national or regional divisions; it is this strategy that this study will follow, in order to respond to the fluid boundaries and geographic

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*Bulletin for the Association of Preservation Technology* 6 (1974): 1-25. Canadian architectural histori often focuses instead on southerly and urban development; see for example: Alan Gowans, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966); Barbara A. Humphreys and Meredith Sykes, *The Buildings of Canada: A Guide to Pre-20<sup>th</sup>-Century Styles in Houses, Churches and Other Structures* (Montreal: Parks Canada, 1974).

divisions of the nineteenth-century imperial world. Many of these studies have specifically focussed on British Protestantism, forming the bulk of the scholarship on nineteenth-century foreign missions; however, there have also been a number of recent studies on Catholic missions, both within their own empires and those of others.<sup>69</sup> Although far from the only works on this subject, key texts by Andrew Porter, Brian Stanley, Hilary M. Carey and Stewart J. Brown, for example, firmly place British Protestantism and missionary activity within the context of imperial expansion, administration, and goals, exploring how missions and empire responded to one another

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<sup>69</sup> On the nineteenth-century British Empire and Protestants, see: Porter, *Religion*; Carey, *God's Empire*; Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*; Maughan, *Mighty England*; Carey (ed.), *Empires of Religion* (Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Cox, *Missionary Enterprise*; Brown, *Providence and Empire*; Cnattingius, *Bishops*; Jeffery Cox, *Imperial Faultlines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Comaroff and Comaroff, "Christianity and Colonialism," 1-22; Ian Copeland, "Christianity as an Arm of Empire: The Ambiguous Case of India Under the East India Company, c.1813-1858," *The Historical Journal* 49 (2006): 1025-54; David Hilliard, "Colonialism and Christianity: The Melanesian Mission in the Solomon Islands," *The Journal of Pacific History* 9 (1974): 93-116; Andrew Porter, "Missions and Empire, c.1873-1914," in *World Christianities*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 560-75; Andrew Porter, "Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1718-1914," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20 (1992): 370-90. On Catholic missionaries, see: J.P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism and the Making of French Catholicism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); J.P. Daughton and Owen White (eds.), *In God's Empire*; Robert Boudens, *Catholic Missionaries in a British Colony: Successes and Failures in Ceylon, 1796-1893* (Uznach, Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire, 1979); Aylward Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa: The "White Fathers" During the Colonial Scramble (1892-1914)* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006); Edmund M. Hogan, *Catholic Missionaries and Liberia: A Study of Christian Enterprise in West Africa, 1842-1950* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1981); James Patrick Tudesco, "Missionaries and French Imperialism: The Role of Catholic Missionaries in French Colonial Expansion," (PhD Thesis, University of Connecticut, 1980); Kenneth Ballhatchet, "The East India Company and Roman Catholic Missionaries," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993): 273-88; Colin Barr, "'Imperium in Imperio': Irish Episcopal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century," *The English Historical Review* 123, no. 502 (2008): 611-50. A helpful examination of the idea of non-British missionaries working in British territory can be found in the work of the Moravians in Labrador; see: J.C.S. Mason, *The Moravian Church and the Missionary Awakening in England, 1760-1800* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001), 5-58; Bill Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 36-48. For a more general text which also discussing empire and mission before and during the nineteenth century, see: Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1966).



within the fluid process of continual growth through the perceived providentialism of British imperial expansion, and through the often complementary goals of the two.<sup>70</sup> J.P. Daughton has achieved a similar study on Catholicism and Catholic missions within the context of French imperial expansion. As a result of these connections, an intimate connection developed between imperial expansion and evangelism in the pushing of the frontier of European influence, a key theme in the examination of missionary work in the nineteenth-century context.<sup>71</sup> This connection achieved an ever-expanding network of missions, an idea well-established in contemporary scholarship, which centred on accepted European power structures and frameworks where ideas and belief were disseminated to the peripheries of influence, both formal and informal, and visa versa; the consequence of this meant that missions even in the furthest corners of empire were neither isolated nor independent in their development.<sup>72</sup> This interconnectedness

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<sup>70</sup> Porter, *Religion*, 43; Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 68; Carey, *God's Empire*, 5-6; Brown, *Providence and Empire*, 196. See also: Jean Usher, "Apostles and Aborigines: The Social Theory of the Church Missionary Society," *Histoire Social/Social History* 4, no. 7 (1971): 35; Hilliard, "Melanesian Missions," 94; Barker, "Frontier," 86-106; Gunson, *Messengers*, 26; Porter, "Long Nineteenth Century," 370-90. With regard to Arctic missionary activity, see: Frank A. Peake, "Church Missionary Society Personnel and Policy in Rupert's Land," *JCHS* 19 (1977): 138-65; Raymond Huel, "Mutuality," 439-66; Huel, *Proclaiming*, 11-16; McCarthy, *Great River*, 27-44; den Otter, *Wilderness*, 138-224. A significant amount of Arctic missionary scholarship has been hagiographic and the connections drawn between these fundamental ideas not thorough explored, for example: Boon, *Anglican Church*; D.B. Marsh, "History of the Anglican Church in Northern Quebec and Ungava," in *Nouveau Québec*, 427-37; Peake, "Essays," 1-171; J.-E. Champagne, *Les Missions Catholiques dans l'Ouest Canadien, 1818-1875*, (Ottawa: Éditions des Études Oblats, 1949); Gaston Carrière, *Histoire documentaire de la Congrégation des Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Est du Canada* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1957); Levasseur, *Les Oblats*.

<sup>71</sup> Porter, *Religion*, 144-46; Cox, *Imperial Faultlines*, 12; Copeland, "Arm of Empire," 1036-38; Maughan, *Mighty England*, 43; Alice L. Conklin, *Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 11-37.

<sup>72</sup> John Webster Grant, "Indian Missions as European Enclaves," *Studies in Religion* 8, no. 3 (1978): 263-75; Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 66-67; Mary L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2007), 3-4; John Darwin, "Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion," *The English*

ultimately means that many of the ideas present in imperial expansion and exploration were also present in missionary activity, and, similarly, many practices and strategies utilized in missions in one area of the world were also present in others.

The growth of missions and empire intrinsically demanded the interaction of Europeans with non-European landscape. As scholars such as Robin Butlin have established the important role spatial interactions played in this expansion, both on an individual level and through the construction of spatial, geographic networks; a central aspect of this was the way in which Europeans perceived the natural world around them.<sup>73</sup> Bernard Smith, for example, in his study of British exploration and perceptions of the Pacific makes clear that this was of central concern to explorers and the European public

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*Historical Review* 112, no. 447 (1997): 617; Hardwick, *Settler Empire*, 11-12; Barker, "Missionary Frontier," 101; Johnston, *Missionary Writing*, 22-29.

<sup>73</sup> Robin A. Butlin, *Geographies of Empire: European Empires and Colonies, c.1880-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3-7; 356-57; Alice Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in the Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11; Mark Brayshaw and Mark Cleary, "Shaping Colonial and Imperial Landscapes," *Landscape Research* 27, no. 1 (2002): 5-10; Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Malden, 2001), 1-23; Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16-68; Brett Christophers, *Positioning the Missionary: John Booth Good and the Confluence of Cultures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 77-79; Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820-1880* (London: Tate Publishing, 2002), 58; Philip D. Morgan, "Encounters between British and 'Indigenous' Peoples, c.1500-c.1800," in *Empire and Others*, 57; Monique Taylor, "'This is Our Dwelling': The Landscape Experience of Jesuit Missionaries to the Huron, 1626-1650," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33, no. 2 (1998): 85-86; John M. MacKenzie, "Empire and the Ecological Apocalypse: The Historiography of the Imperial Environment," in *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies*, ed. Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997), 216-17; Jane Samson, "Landscapes of Faith: British Missionary Tourism in the South Pacific," in *Mixed Messages: Materiality, Textuality, Missions*, ed. Jamie S. Scott and Gareth Griffiths (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 98-99; George H. Stankey, "Beyond the Campfire's Light: Historical Roots of the Wilderness Concept," *Natural Resources Journal* 29 (1989): 16.

alike.<sup>74</sup> The landscape was integral to imperial and evangelical interactions with the non-European world through discussion and presentation of the exotic landscapes, flora and fauna and through the creation of new spaces and places that responded to European understandings and needs to the built and natural environment. While this was a central concern in most European expansion, especially when explorers and missionaries entered into new territories, Robert David and Janice Cavell have established that this heavy focus on landscape and space was particularly marked in Arctic expansion where the environment was extremely remote and very dissimilar to that of the rest of the known world, making space and nature key concerns both in exploratory discourse and that of the missionaries who followed them.<sup>75</sup>

At the same time, Europeans were also coming into contact with indigenous people with whom they had little familiarity and whose cultural, economic and racial differences from incoming imperialists led to their designation as an “other” or the well-established trope of the “noble savage”.<sup>76</sup> Anthony Pagden, among others, has shown how Europeans used this designation to separate indigenous people from themselves on fundamental levels; although these ideas evolved throughout the early modern period, indigenous people were almost consistently painted as childlike, uncivilized and in need

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<sup>74</sup> Smith, *Imagining*, 10; 211-12.

<sup>75</sup> David, *British Imagination*, 87; Cavell, *Connected Narrative*, 41.

<sup>76</sup> James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18.

of improvement.<sup>77</sup> Even in the nineteenth-century, missionaries and explorers were still engaged in first-hand encounters with non-Europeans throughout the globe whose customs and societal structures were foreign to them.

For missionaries, contact with indigenous people was a key aspect of establishing a framework for conversion and they established this both through their own volition and through imperial and exploratory expansion. Indeed, exploration and mission were intimately intertwined in their desire to contact new people and open up new lands for European influence; David Livingstone is the most obvious, but certainly not only, example of this.<sup>78</sup> Missionaries, however, did not only desire to convert people but often also desired to enact fundamental cultural change on indigenous people, as has been clearly demonstrated by scholars such as the Comaroffs' in their study of missions to the Tswana in southern Africa, in order to fit European social, cultural and economic norms,

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<sup>77</sup> Pagden, *European Encounters*; Axtell, *European and the Indian*; Morgan, "Encounters," 47; Robert F. Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-186* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 1-15; C.L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians of Canada and the United States, 180-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 11; Alison Twells, *The Civilizing Mission and the English Middle Class, 179-1850 The 'Heathen' at Home and Abroad* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 12-16; H. Alan Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society, 1840-1890* (London: Routledge, 1965), 7; Peter J. Kitson, "Romanticism and Colonialism: Races, Places, People, 1785-1800," in *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780-1830*, ed. Timothy Fulford and Peter J. Kitson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13-34; Gregory D. Smithers, "The 'Pursuits of Civilized Man': Race and the Meaning of Civilization in the United States and Australia, 1790s-1850s," *Journal of World History* 20 (2009): 252-54; Antonio R. Gualtieri, "Canadian Missionary Perceptions of Indian and Inuit Culture and Religious Tradition," *Studies in Religion* 9, no. 3 (1980): 302-306; James P. Ronda, "The European Indian: Jesuit Civilization Planning in New France," *Church History* 41, no. 3 (1972): 385; Richard Daly, "Being and Becoming in a World that Won't Stand Still: The Case of Metlakatla," *The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 49 (2005): 24-25; Hall, "Ethnicity," 214-25; Bayly, "Power, Perception and Identity," 19-41.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew C. Ross, *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire* (London: Hambleton and London, 2002), 209.

which often included material culture.<sup>79</sup> There was certainly nuance to this approach which was not homogeneous and even questioned in some quarters; some, as Sara Sohmer has explored, rejected this premise entirely while others, notably Catholics as demonstrated by both Daughton and Martha McCarthy, made attempts to limit cultural change, although this could be extremely difficult because of the interconnectedness between European Christianity and European culture.<sup>80</sup> In modern scholarship on Catholic mission, the practice of adapting Christian practice to local culture is known as

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<sup>79</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:4. See also: Stanley, "Christianity and Civilization," 169-97; Brian Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement and the Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Historical Journal* 26 (1983): 71-94; Alison Twells, "'A Christian and civilised land': The British Middle Class and the Civilising Mission," in *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940*, ed. Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999): 34-46; James S. Scott, "Cultivating Christians in Colonial Canadian Missions," in *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous People: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad*, ed. Alwyn Austin and James S. Scott (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 24; Allan K. Davidson, "Culture and Ecclesiology: The Church Missionary Society and New Zealand," in *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999*, ed. Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 205-206; J.F. A. Ajayi, "Henry Venn and the Policy of Development," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 1, no. 4 (1959): 338; John H. Archer, "The Anglican Church and the Indian in the Northwest," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 28 (1986): 19; Gerald J. Goodwin, "Christianity, Civilization and the Savage: The Anglican Mission to the American Indian," *Historical Magazine for the Protestant Episcopal Church* 42 (1973): 93-110; Angela Middleton, "Missionization in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparison," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 14 (2010): 170-87; Viera Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa and their Role in the Transformation of African Societies," *Asian and African Studies* 16, no. (2007): 255; Paul Francis Prucha, "Two Roads to Conversion: Protestant and Catholic Missionaries in the Pacific Northwest," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (1988): 130-37; John-Paul Weist, "Bringing Christ to the Nations: Shifting Modes of Mission Among Jesuits in China," *The Catholic Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (1997): 668; Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (2002): 301-25; Howard Le Couteur, "High Anglican Churchmen and the Expansion of Empire," *Journal of Religious History* 32, no. 2 (2008): 194; Elizabeth Elbourne, "The Foundation of the Church Missionary Society: The Anglican Missionary Impulse," in *The Church of England, c.1689-c.1833: From Tolerance to Tractarianism*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 256; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 151; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 110.

<sup>80</sup> Sohmer, "Christianity Without Civilization," 174-97; Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 41-43; McCarthy, *Great River*, xviii-xx. See also: Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses in Dene History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 117-21; Jerry E. Clark, "Jesuit Impact on Potawatomi Acculturation: A Comparison of Two Villages in the Mid-Plains," *Ethnohistory* 26, no. 4 (1979): 389-9; Porter, *Religion*, 93-94; Williams, "Not Transplanting," 147-72.

inculturation and this strategy was used in Catholic mission in the seventeenth century, notably by Jesuit Matteo Ricci. Inculturation as an approach to mission, had largely fallen out of favour by the nineteenth century with the rise of ultramontanist and the focus on the universality of Roman practice.

From a methodological standpoint, what is important about these texts is their balanced view of missionary enterprise. Although some texts, such as Stanley's, are clearly sympathetic to the missionary cause, the overall approach of most scholars seeks to explore the connections between missionaries and empire through a nuanced study of their motivations, differences throughout the globe and the often-difficult topic of racial interactions. In particular, the approach taken by most contemporary literature on this topic eschews a purely postcolonial methodology.<sup>81</sup> There are clear aspects of post-colonialism in these texts, and recognition of the importance of certain postcolonial concepts in the study of the interactions between European and non-European groups, particularly when obvious power struggles were involved; an excellent example of this can be found in the Comaroffs' study. However, recent scholarship on mission and empire has recognized that the interactions between European and non-European groups were more complicated and nuanced than the binary power relationship implied

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<sup>81</sup> Contemporary scholarship has identified some key issues with postcolonialism in the study of the history of empire, including its literary focus and tendency to present a binary viewpoint of more complex interactions. For a good overview of these discussions, see: Dane Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24, no. 3 (1996): 345-63. See also: Richard King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. J.R. Hinnells (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 275-90.

by much postcolonial scholarship; this is particularly relevant in some difficult field where the accepted power narratives were inverted when, for example, missionaries came to rely on indigenous people and technologies for their survival. For example, in McCarthy's study on the nineteenth-Oblate missions to the Dene, there is explicit recognition that the introduction of Christianity was an on-going dialogue where the Dene accepted, or rejected, Christian teaching on their own terms and where missionaries had little power to impose belief.<sup>82</sup>

There are some postcolonial concepts, however, which are important for this study. One is the idea of the "other", developed from post-colonialism and strongly associated with the work of Edward Said, which designated indigenous people and lands as separate from European experience and implying a position of cultural, economic and social superiority.<sup>83</sup> Crucially, the identity of the "other" is recognized as being fundamentally constructed, creating a dichotomous relationship in missionary and imperial discourse where indigenous people were assigned an effectively imagined identity based on pre-existing racial and environmental prejudices. This designation fundamentally shaped how missionaries approached indigenous people and the goals and strategies of mission.

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<sup>82</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 185.

<sup>83</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 7; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2000), 154-58; John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 8-9.

The other key concept is that of metropole and periphery, drawn from scholarship on imperial expansion which recognizes the dissemination of power, ideology and practice from metropolitan centres, London for example, to the far-flung reaches of empire.<sup>84</sup> There is clear evidence of this in missionary activities where ideology, policy and funding was driven through central nexuses, particularly for ultramontane Catholics whose cues were taken directly from Rome. One of the central criticisms of this approach is that the periphery too informed the centre in a globalized framework that was not one-sided and its unique conditions forced individuals to respond to the varied circumstances present at the various edges of empire where policy and ideology sometimes needed to be modified.<sup>85</sup> A more appropriate framework, therefore, is that of an interconnected network of mission and empire throughout the globe where centre and periphery engaged in a back and forth dialogue shaped by evolving conditions.<sup>86</sup> Architecturally, this approach was established by George Kubler and Martin Soria in their study of art and architecture in the Iberian Peninsula and its empires which they approached as a singular field of study; this interconnectedness can be equally applied to missionary

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<sup>84</sup> Ashcroft et al, *Post-Colonial*, 32-33; 123-24; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000* (London: Pearson, 2002), 26-28; Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism, 1860-1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 51; Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 8-9.

<sup>85</sup> For example: David Lambert and Alan Lester, "Geographies of Colonial Philanthropy," *Progress in Human Geography* 28, no. 3 (2004): 4-5; Butlin, *Geographies*, 26-28.

<sup>86</sup> Alan Lester, "Spatial Concepts and the Historical Geographies of British Colonialism," in *Writing Imperial Histories*, ed. Andrew S. Thompson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 118-42; David Lambert and Alan Lester, "Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects," in *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6-10.



activity.<sup>87</sup> This study relies on the assumption that missionaries saw themselves within wider systems of evangelical practice where work in North America built on ideas from home, and from elsewhere, making these missions neither ideologically isolated, nor responding to cue solely from the north.

### *Architecture and Space*

This approach also applies to architecture, as Kubler and Soria established. Missionaries looked back to architectural practice in Christian Europe as a model, while looking forward to indigenous architecture as an extension of the cultural other, defining buildings equally by what they were and what they were not. Necessarily, buildings responded to a clear practical need for housing, shelter and other functions, but they have also been recognized in contemporary scholarship as an integral aspect of the historical geography of European expansion, both imperial and evangelical.<sup>88</sup> It became particularly important in areas with disparate built cultures to that of Europe. The spatial nature of European expansion manifested itself through interactions with the built and

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<sup>87</sup> George Kubler and Martin Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions, 1500-1800* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1959), xxv.

<sup>88</sup> There is a growing body of scholarship on this topic. See, for example: G.A. Bremner, *Imperial Gothic: Religious Architecture and High Anglican Gothic Culture in the British Empire c.1840-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); G.A. Bremner (ed.), *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Phoebe Stanton, *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste, 1840-1856* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1968); Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996); .

natural environments through documentation, development and modification. For missions, that space was the mission station, a location identified by Kubler in his study on the mission architecture of New Mexico as a holistic point of interaction and dialogue with the edge of empire as a key manifestation of European presence and ideology.<sup>89</sup> In particular, the mission station has been recognized as the spatial manifestation of the general desire to convert and civilize indigenous people and as a place of meeting and mediation. In his text on missions throughout Canada from the sixteenth century onwards, John Webster Grant recognized the station and its spatiality as an integral aspect of how missionaries responded to the North American landscape, defining this space as the “classical”<sup>90</sup> mission, where centralized infrastructure projects aimed at gathering indigenous people into a European environment; he also noted that these missions generally had an agricultural component, creating fundamental changes in the landscape and, alongside the new built forms, creating a separation between the Christian and natural worlds.<sup>91</sup> Through its role in the establishment of imperial geography and in advancing missionary activity, Grant identifies the station as a core agent of evangelism, functioning practically, symbolically and actively to advance missionary aims for the transformation of indigenous people. Kubler has also recognized

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<sup>89</sup> George Kubler, *The Religious Architecture of New Mexico in the Colonial Period and Since the American Occupation* (Colorado Springs: The Taylor Museum, 1940), 7. See also: Thomas F. Reese, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Studies in Ancient American and European Art: The Collected Essays of George Kubler*, ed. Thomas F. Reese (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xix.

<sup>90</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 170.

<sup>91</sup> See also: Samson, “Landscapes of Faith,” 92-93.

this framework for mission architecture in Catholic mission in New Spain.<sup>92</sup> This recognition is not limited to Grant and Kubler, however, and contemporary scholarship, even that which does not explicitly focus on architecture, generally recognized the station as the central nexus of activity and an important space with the growth of missionary programmes.<sup>93</sup>

One of the key functions of the mission station was the establishment of Christian space in non-Christian territory through which European culture, belief and ideology could be introduced, or imposed, upon both indigenous people and their lands through the creation of spaces of interaction, or “contact zones.”<sup>94</sup> In effect, they are frontier spaces where, as defined by Turner, the so-called “civilized and savage” worlds collide. More

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<sup>92</sup> George Kubler, “Two Modes of Franciscan Architecture,” in *Collected Essays*, 35.

<sup>93</sup> There are a significant number of texts which support this approach. See, for example, Jane Sales, *Mission Stations and the Coloured Community of the Eastern Cape, 1800-1852* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1975,) 58-68; Sujit Sivasindaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 155-57; Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 153-1572*, trans. Lesley Boyd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 64-78; John M. Todd, *African Mission: A Historical Study of the Society of African Missions* (London: Burns and Oates, 1964), 77-78; François Raison-Jourde, “Mission L.M.S et Mission Jesuite face aux communautés villageoises Merina: foundation et fonctionnement des paroisses entre 1869 et 1876,” *Africa* 53, no. 2 (1983): 57-58; Ingie Hovland, “Umpumulo, Place of Rest: A Nineteenth-Century Christian Mission Station among the Zulus,” *Radical History Review* 99 (2007): 140-57; Justin Willis, “The Nature of a Missionary Community: The Universities’ Mission to Central Africa in Bonde,” *Past and Present* 140 (1993): 127-54; Vernal, “Farmerfield,” 407-28; Clark, “Jesuit Impact,” 377-95; Shorter, *Cross and Flag*, 106-13; Christophers, *Positioning*, 67-91; Gunson, *Messengers*, 273; Axell, *European*, 62.

<sup>94</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 4. See also: Rebecca Allen, “Alta California Missions and the Pre-1849 Transformation of Coastal Lands,” *Historical Archeology* 44 (2010): 69; Catherine Ettinger, “Architecture as Order in the California Missions,” *Southern California Quarterly* 85 (2003): 7-8; Jean O’Brian, “‘They Are So Frequently Shifting their Place of Residence’: Land and the Construction of a Social Place for Indians in Colonial Massachusetts,” in *Empire and Others*, 206; Carlos Zerón, “Mission et espace missionnaire: Les bases de matérielle de la conversion,” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 169, no. 1 (2015): 307-34; Barker, “Missionary Frontier,” 100; Grant, “European Enclaves,” 272; Brown, *Providence and Empire*, 141; 161; Gunson, *Messengers*, 34; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:66; Barker, “Missionary Frontier,” 100; Daly, “Being and Becoming,” 26-30.

helpfully, the “contact zone” was articulated by Mary Louise Pratt in her study on travel writing, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, where she defined this space as:

the space of colonial encounters, the space in which people geographically separated come in contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality and intractable conflict.<sup>95</sup>

Like Turner’s frontier, Pratt’s contact zone defines a spatial understanding of imperial expansion and interaction; although not her focus, the mission station undoubtedly fits into this categorization, as a place where culture is mediated. Pratt’s definition also addresses an issue with Turner’s nineteenth-century thesis, which suggests an ever-advancing European frontier, ignoring the pushback and mediation occurring in these spaces, where transformation occurred through an ongoing dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous people.<sup>96</sup> But missionaries certainly saw these spaces as Turner did, as agent of a continually advancing Christian frontier. These dual ideas of contact zone and frontier, therefore, are both central to understanding what role the mission station was intended to take and how it did so.

This understanding can also be applied to landscape as a wider space at the edge of European influence where missionaries came in contact with indigenous people. Within them as spaces intended to both create dialogue and enact transformation, Grant called

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<sup>95</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6.

<sup>96</sup> Dolores E. Janiewski, “‘Confusion of Mind’: Colonial and Postcolonial Discourses About Frontier Encounters,” *Journal of American Studies* 32, no. 1 (1998): 81-82.

mission stations “European enclaves”<sup>97</sup> for their physical and ideological position as European space in a non-European world whose clear intent was to push the frontier by introducing new ideas and changing the form of the land through building. Similarly, for conversion to occur, it was imperative that indigenous people enter these spaces and engage with missionaries, making evangelization distinctly spatial, relying on architecture as a mediating place.<sup>98</sup>

In particular, buildings worked to respond to what Ingie Hovland has identified as “the problem of presence”<sup>99</sup> where missionaries needed to show their arrival and agenda within a distinctly non-Christian environment, something that was visual and based on the associated rituals and practice of Christian life. This is something architecture was able to do through its material form and the introduction of new architectural types into the environment. When discussing mission stations and religious architecture in general, the church is the most commonly discussed structure, not only because of its clear importance in Christian worship, but also because of its distinctive architectural forms which established a clear Christian presence within indigenous communities and

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<sup>97</sup> Grant, “European Enclaves,” 263.

<sup>98</sup> Morgan, “Encounters,” 55; Grant, *Wintertime*, 171; Scott, “Cultivating Christians,” 23; Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 158; Bayly, “Power, Perception and Identity,” 30; Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 167; Van Williams, “Acculturation,” 91-102; Robert W. Strayer, *The Making of Missions Communities in East Africa: Anglicans and Africans in Colonial Kenya, 1875-1935* (London: Heinemann, 1978):78.

<sup>99</sup> Ingie Hovland, “Christianity, Place/Space and Anthropology: Thinking Across Recent Research on Evangelical Place-making,” *Religion* 46, no. 3 (2016): 338. See also: Matthew Engelke, *The Problem of Presence: Beyond Scripture in an African Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

lands.<sup>100</sup> However, the mission station necessarily included other structures and, both as individual structures and as a unified whole, worked towards this aim as identified by Hovland.<sup>101</sup> In general, mission stations were comprised of three types of structures, each with a key role in the transmission of belief and ideology and which demonstrated a new, Christian presence in frontier spaces: domestic buildings, namely houses; institutional structures, including churches, schools and hospitals; and structures of landscape modification, such as agricultural and industrial buildings, as well as farms themselves.<sup>102</sup> Domestic space, in particular, has gained increasing recognition for its

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<sup>100</sup> Alexander Bailey, *The Andean Hybrid Baroque: Convergent Cultures in the Churches of Colonial Peru* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2010): 35-42; Karina Hestad Skeie, *Building God's Kingdom: Norwegian Missionaries in Highland Madagascar, 1866-1903* (Leiden: Brill: 2013):107-52; John R. Dichtl, *Frontiers of Faith: Bringing Catholicism to the West in the Early Republic* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2008): 91; Michael Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier: French Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Priesthood in the United States, 1789-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010):66-68; Paul Hedges, "Architecture, Inculturation and Christian Mission: The Buildings of the Cambridge Mission to Delhi and their Meaning for the Church Today," *International Review of Mission* 89, no. 353 (2000): 182-84; Gerard Morriset, "Les missions indiennes et la peinture," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 4 (1934): 308-20.; Mark Theil, "Catholic Ladders and Native American Evangelism," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 27, no. 1 (2009): 49; Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 93; Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 172-73.

<sup>101</sup> Kubler, *New Mexico*, 6-7.

<sup>102</sup> On schooling more generally, see J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 61-88; Jamie S. Scott, "Penitential and Penitentiary: Native Canadians and Colonial Mission Education," in *Mixed Messages*, 111-33; Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 69-77; Francis, "Cultivating Christians," 30-32; Long, "James Bay Region," 75-89; Norman Etherington, "Education and Medicine," in *Missions and Empire*, 261-84; Larry Prochner, Helen May and Baljit Kaur, "'The Blessings of Civilization': Nineteenth-Century Missionary Infant Schools for Young Native Children in Three Colonial Settings—India, Canada and New Zealand, 1820s-1840s," *Paedagogica Historica* 45 (2009): 83-102; Rebecca Rogers, "Teaching Morality and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Algeria: Gender and Practice," *History of Education* 40, no. 6 (2011): 741-59; Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 121-44; Claude Champagne, "Mission et civilisation dans l'Ouest canadien: Vital Grandin, 1829-1902," *Sessions d'étude—Société d'histoire de l'Église catholique* 50, no. 1 (1983): 348-58; McCarthy, "Theory," 52; Robert Carney, "The Native-Wilderness Equation: Catholic and Other School Orientations in the Western Arctic," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Study Sessions* 48 (1981): 61-77; Derek G. Smith, "The Policy of 'Aggressive Civilization' and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic School for Native People in Canada," *Anthropologica* 43 (2001): 253-71; Jana Tschurennev, "Incorporation and Differentiation: Popular Education and the Imperial Civilizing Mission in Early Nineteenth-Century India," in *Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development*, ed. Carey Watt and Michael

role in the inculcation of Euro-Christian family and gender norms.<sup>103</sup> Together, these structures formed the contact zone, where missionaries changed landscape and attempted to enact transformation on the indigenous people they viewed in need of spiritual and temporal salvation.

Three modern studies which offer particularly robust accounts of the mission station as a whole and its role in the place of cultural mediation are: Ingie Hovland's *Mission Station Christianity: Norwegian Missionaries in Colonial Natal and Zululand, Southern Africa, 1850-1890*; Karine Hestad Skeie's *Building God's Kingdom: Norwegian Missionaries in Highland Madagascar, 1866-1903*; and John and Jean Comaroff's *Of Revelation and Revolution*, where there is particular emphasis on spatial issues in the

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Mann (London: Anthem Press, 2011); Usher, "Tsimshian," 47-49; Gunson, *Messengers*, 237-45. On the architecture of mission schools, see in particular: Ian W.G. Smith, "Schooling on the Missionary Frontier: The Hohi Mission Station, New Zealand," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 18 (2014): 612-28; Geoffrey Carr, "Atopoi of the Modern: Revisiting the Place of the Residential School," *English Studies in Canada* 35 (2009): 109-35; Geoffrey Carr, "'House of No Spirit': An Architectural History of the Indian Residential School in British Columbia," (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2011); Tanya Martin, "The Architecture of Charity: Power, Religion and Gender in North America, 1840-1960," (PhD diss. University of California Berkeley, 2002).

<sup>103</sup> Myra Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002): 73-117; Diana Langmore, "The Object Lesson of a Christian Civilized Home," in *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 84-94; Dana L. Roberts, "The 'Christian Home' as a Cornerstone of Anglo-American Missionary Thought and Practice," in *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914*, ed. Dana L. Roberts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008): 134-65; Modupe Labode, "From Heathen Krall to Christian Home: Anglican Mission Education and African Christian Girls, 1850-1900," in *Women and Missions: Past and Present*, ed. Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener (Providence: Berg, 1993): 126-44; Angela Middleton, "Missionization and the Cult of Domesticity, 1769-1850: Local Investigation of Global Process," in *Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on Gender Transformations: From Private to Public*, ed. Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood (New York: Springer, 2013), 149-70; Twells, *Civilizing Mission*, 191; Johnston, *Missionary Writing*, 51-55.

second volume.<sup>104</sup> All three focus on Africa, but the central focus they place on the mission station and its buildings is applicable throughout the mission field and fits into Grant's model of a spatial, as well as spiritual, mission. They recognize buildings as integral to the mission's role as a contact space as well as exploring how buildings themselves had agency through function and symbolism, establishing architecture as an integral aspect of the geography of mission which itself aided in the processes of conversion, civilization and cultural mediation. This study follows that approach, in order to show how architecture and the mission station were integral zones of encounter which facilitated and aided in the inculcation of Christian ideology and, in theory, the transformation of indigenous society.

However, in recognizing the importance of the mission station as a whole the contact zone necessarily extends outside the walls of its buildings into the wider environment, where missionaries created temporary points of contact when meeting indigenous people through itinerate ministry. The latter of these has received some limited attention from scholars, notably by Skeie and McCarthy.<sup>105</sup> The former, however, has been more thoroughly explored, particularly in two complementary studies by Sujit

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<sup>104</sup> Ingie Hovland, *Mission Station Christianity: Norwegian Missionaries in Colonial Natal and Zululand, Southern Africa, 1850-1890* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 20-22; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:33; 2:274-92; Skeie, *God's Kingdom*, 75-106.

<sup>105</sup> Karina Hestad Skeie, "Building God's Kingdom: The Importance of the House to Nineteenth-Century Norwegian Missionaries in Madagascar," in *Ancestors, Power and History in Madagascar*, ed. Karen Middleton (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 91-99; McCarthy, *Great River*, 73-96. See also: Peggy Brock, "Mission Encounters in the Colonial World: British Columbia and South-West Australia," *Journal of Religious History* 24, no. 2 (2000): 162-64.



Sivasundaram and John Mackenzie which address the role of landscape with mission development.<sup>106</sup> Both Sivasundaram and MacKenzie identify landscape change and modification, which included but was not limited to building, as an integral aspect of missionary spatial development intended to enact change within indigenous communities. The extension of the evangelical project into the landscape aimed to reorient the indigenous world alongside its people, as part of an overarching desire of missionaries to transform and improve through wide-reaching societal and environmental change to remake the “other” in their own image.<sup>107</sup>

What this thesis does not attempt to do is to present the perspectives of indigenous people who came in contact with the missionaries. While this is integral to understanding the overall encounter narrative and has recently gained traction as an important aspect of historical study, the focus of this study lies with missionaries, their assumptions about indigenous people and the northern environment, their response to

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<sup>106</sup>Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*; John M. Mackenzie, “Missionaries, Science and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century Africa,” in *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914*, ed. Andrew Porter (Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003): 106-30. See also: Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:119-65; Scott, “Cultivating Christians,” 22-23; Francis, “Civilizing,” 87; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 24-38; Gabriel Martinez-Serna, “Jesuit Missionaries, Indian Politics and Environmental Transformation in the Lagoon March of Northeastern New Spain,” *Journal of Early American History* 3 (2013): 210-11; Falloon, *To Plough*, 8-18; Allen, “Alta California,” 74; R.P. Hargreaves, “Waimate: Pioneer New Zealand Farm,” *Agricultural History* 36 (1962): 38-45; Fritz Pannekoek, “Protestant Agricultural Zions for the Western Indian,” *JCHS* 14 (1972): 55-66; Julia Sarreal, “Revisiting Cultivated Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Daily Life in the Guaraná Missions,” *Ethnohistory* 60, no. 1 (2013): 101-24; O’Brian, “Land,” 206; Stankey, “Wilderness Concept,” 17-18; Hovland, “Umpumulo,” 142-45; Smithers, “Civilized Man,” 255-56.

<sup>107</sup> Terence Ranger, “Taking Hold of the Land: Holy Places and Pilgrimages in Twentieth-Century Zimbabwe,” *Past and Present* 117 (1987): 158-94; Norman C. Habel, *The Land is Mind: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 63; Hovland, *Mission Station*, 20; Christophers, *Positioning*, 78-91; Sarreal, “Cultivated Agriculture,” 109-10; Strayer, *Mission Communities*, 30-32.

non-European space, and their policy and practice.<sup>108</sup> However, it must be recognized that, without the agency of indigenous people, missionaries' schemes would have come to nought. Northern missions functioned because indigenous people chose to participate, engaging with missionaries on issues of spirituality, morality and education and aiding the missionaries in their survival and travel; in a field with limited imperial engagement with the missionary project, indigenous agency becomes all the more vital to their operations. Missionaries generally portrayed indigenous people as child-like recipients of missionary intervention, but missionary correspondence implicitly reveals that this was not the case as indigenous people took an active role in the interactions between their own communities and the newcomers.

With that focus in mind, this thesis looks explicitly at missionaries and their understandings of architecture's role in mission, exploring how they perceived the people and the landscape with whom they were coming in contact, how they believed the development of mission stations would assist in their goal of converting and civilizing indigenous people and their lands to Christian and European norms, and how those goals manifested in practice when faced with the reality of the northern landscape. This thesis specifically focussed on the decades between 1850 and 1920 which was the period where missionaries were the primary non-indigenous influence, the HBC notwithstanding, on the architectural fabric of northern Canada and on indigenous

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<sup>108</sup>There is an increasing amount of scholarship on this issue. Some relevant studies are: Abel, *Drum Songs*; Butlin, *Geographies*, 383-84; Brock, "Encounters," 161; McCarthy, *Great River*, 97-106.

communities. Specifically, this period predates the involvement of the Canadian federal government in the far north. While examining some developments prior to 1850, specifically surrounding Arctic exploration and early missions in the Canadian west which affected the later growth and strategy of northern mission, the architectural development of missions that occurred in the northern part of the continent was focussed primarily during this period. Similarly, this thesis also focusses primarily on missions in the then-vaguely defined geographic region that missionaries considered to be the far north, an area where there was little to no non-indigenous settlement, creating a unique mission environment that was geographically and culturally remote from the European world. Within that scope, this study examines the desire of missionaries to modify the northern world through architectural development and push the frontier to establish so-called “civilization” amongst indigenous people, by examining the pre-existing cultural understandings of the northern environment and indigenous people in a dialogue that was both explicitly European and consciously Christian. In doing so, it shows how missionaries responded to that understanding through their building programmes. Drawing on existing literature on European expansion, contact and building, this thesis shows how missionaries responded to and developed the spatial geography of the mission to “the ends of the earth” in their drive to bring Christ’s word to non-Christian people.

This thesis is divided into three sections which each address a particular aspect of the missionary encounter with the north. Chapters 1 through 3 address the wider geographic scope of northern missionary work, examining the perceptions of northern missionary work, their initial establishment in the Canadian Prairies and experiences there which shaped their approach to northern expansion, and the creation of geographic networks as the initial step in the development of northern missions. Chapters 4 and 5 address specific structure types, including houses, churches and schools, and the roles they played within the northern missionary context. Chapters 6 through 8 deal with specific case studies unique to the northern missionary context. Together these chapters outline the development of the built environment in nineteenth-century northern missions and the role it played in missionaries' attempts to convert indigenous people to Christianity and change their culture.



## 1: The North in the European Imagination

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Arctic was well-entrenched in the European imagination as a region of adventure, danger and the unknown, exemplified in the heroic exploits of explorers who penetrated the far north for scientific exploration, map-making and imperial expansion.<sup>1</sup> This was a period where the rapid expansion of empire brought Europeans in contact with new people and environments. But amongst these places, the Arctic was perhaps the most exotic and fantastical, one of the last truly remote and unknown parts of the world.<sup>2</sup> As a result, a perception of the Arctic within the British and European worldview developed that was both pervasive and influential in the way that the region was discussed and approached.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David, *British Imagination*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> See for example: Pagden, *European Encounters*, 118; Catherine Hall, *Cultures of Empire: Colonizer in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> Kitson, "Romanticism and Colonialism," 14.

The first nineteenth-century Arctic expeditions set off from Britain in 1818 and, a century later, were still present in the public consciousness. In 1904, the Rev. Arthur Lewis reflected on this, but his focus was not scientific exploration, but rather the extension of Christianity. He wrote:

Arctic exploration seeks always to claim Christian sympathy and support as well as that of the general public. The very heart of the nation becomes stirred with the exploits of Franklin, or McClintock, or Nansen. But these things, noble as they are in opening up unexplored lands, adding to our scientific knowledge, or testing human nature in its pluck and endurance, leave out of sight the greatest of all human projects, the evangelization of the heathen.<sup>4</sup>

For Lewis, the two major European projects in the Arctic – exploration and evangelism – were intimately intertwined, although one, in his view, was significantly more important than the other. Nevertheless, these two enterprises were connected, particularly in the way in which the north was viewed and, by extension, approached in exploratory and missionary interactions with the region and its people.

The north was consistently viewed as a frontier zone. Drawing on Turner's definition of the frontier, it was acknowledged as a place where the civilized, Christian, European world met the untamed northern environment and non-Christian indigenous people, but with Europeans able to enact little change upon them. As a result, the Arctic territory remained a perpetual frontier where transformation was extremely difficult to

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur Lewis, *The Life and Work of E.J. Peck Among the Eskimos* (New York: A.C. Armstrong, 1904), 315.

enact due to the scale, environment and geography of the landscape. This deterred neither explorers nor missionaries, however, from whom the romantic draw of the Arctic in both imperial and Christian narratives fuelled a continual desire to push this final frontier and transform the land and its people.

*Points of Contact: Arctic Explorers and the Hudson's Bay Company*

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Arctic was constructed in the European imagination as a vast wasteland, romanticised through art and literature which allowed the territory to become deeply engrained within the consciousness of a public that had never been there.<sup>5</sup>As a result, accounts portrayed the Arctic as sublime and exotic, the ideal place to test the ability of empire to expand in adverse conditions. Although this type of romanticism was also applied to other places under European influence, Africa and the South Pacific, nowhere was it more marked than in the British exploration of the Arctic. This was because the region's remoteness and difficult environment where the European world collided with the most powerful forces of nature.

A central aspect of the constructed romanticism of the north was that it was extremely inaccessible. In the first half of the nineteenth century contact had only been achieved

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<sup>5</sup> Cavell, *Connected Narrative*, 28.



through polar expeditions, such as those of John Ross, William Edward Parry and John Franklin, and commercial enterprise, specifically the fur trade and the HBC. The perspectives of these two groups completely shaped the way in which the region was viewed and, eventually, approached by missionaries in the second half of the century.

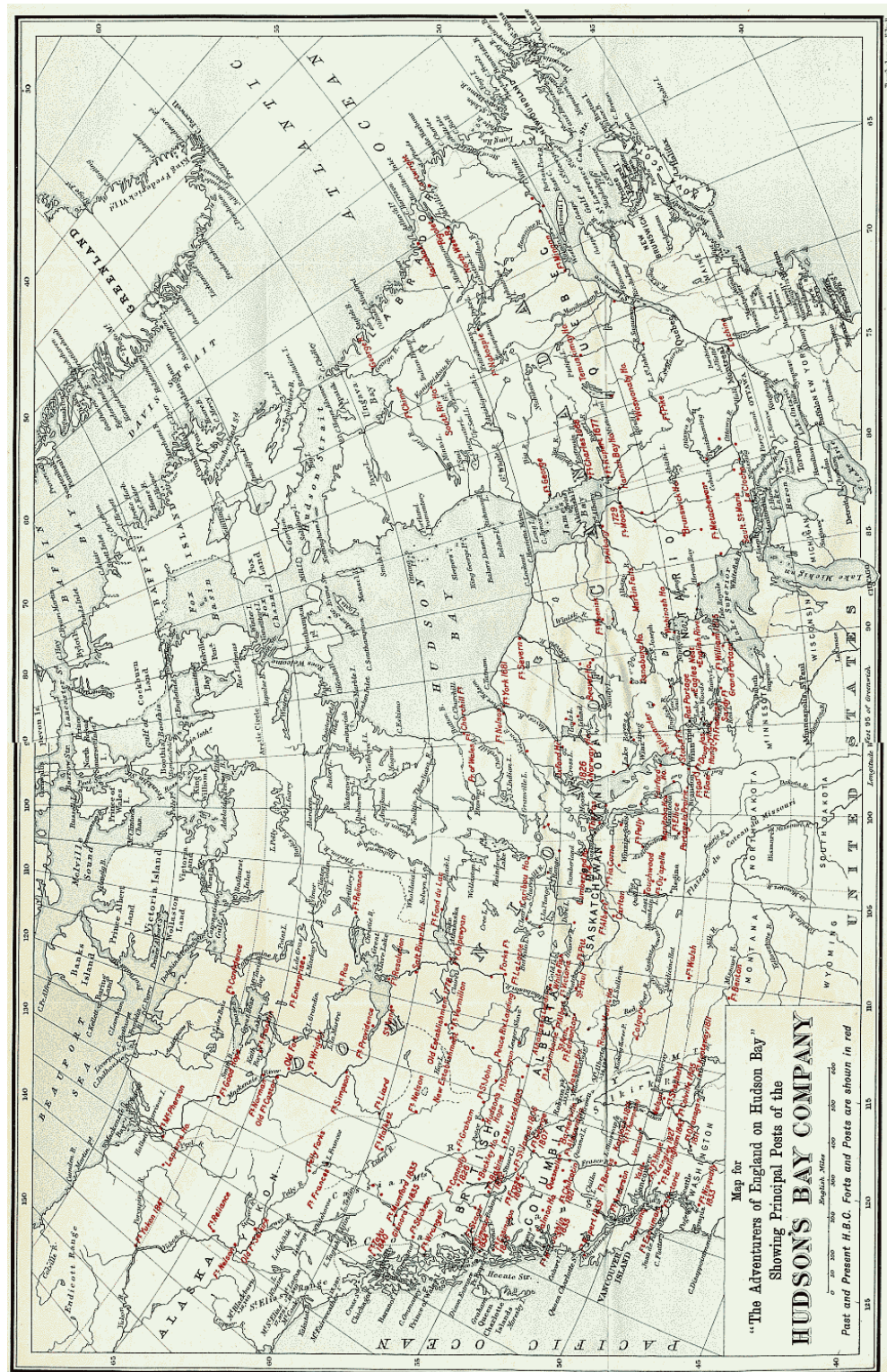
Of the two, the HBC was the most permanent European fixture in the north and also provided the least information about it. The HBC's monopoly extended across the territory of Rupert's Land and, after an 1821 merger with the Montreal-based North West Company (NWC), into the North-Western Territory, specifically the Mackenzie River Basin (fig. 1.1).<sup>6</sup> As the major administrator and economic driver in the region, the HBC was the primary European influence in the north for most of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Their presence was longstanding, powerful and permanent, with fur trading posts and employees dispersed throughout the continent, looking for commercial gain. In contrast, the Arctic expeditions were of a different character. Dating back to Martin Frobisher's 1576 expedition to find a commercial route to the Orient, the search for the Northwest Passage had shifted largely to geographic and scientific research by the nineteenth century, although the discovery of a passage was still the ultimate aim.<sup>8</sup> Undertaken primarily by the British Navy and brought to a climax by the loss of the

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<sup>6</sup> Innis, *Fur Trade*, 119-20; Ann Carlos, "The Causes and Origins of the North American Fur Trade Rivalry: 1804-1810," *Journal of Economic History* 41 (1981): 779.

<sup>7</sup> Galbraith, *Imperial Factor*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Berton, *The Arctic Grail: The Quest for the Northwest Passage and the North Pole, 1818-1909* (Toronto: McClelland Stewart, 1988), 16-20.



1.1: "The Principal Posts of the Hudson's Bay Company." Illustration from Agnes C. Laut. *The 'Adventurers of England' on Hudson Bay*, 6.

Franklin expedition in 1845, these expeditions were temporary and transitory, but no less integral to shaping the British understanding of the north than their commercial counterparts.

Indeed, the majority of information about the north came from explorers. The HBC did not publicize accounts of the territory, nor of its extensive exploration programme for fear of the negative impact of publicity on its enterprises, especially in the North-Western Territory where the HBC did not hold a chartered monopoly. It was also concerned about settlement in the more southerly part of the territory which was relatively fertile and accessible from both British North America and the United States.<sup>9</sup> The HBC was often accused of being deliberately secretive about their operations and the state of the territory, a charge that was exacerbated by instances of unwillingness to assist naval expeditions along the Arctic coast.<sup>10</sup> What accounts were publicized painted a picture of an inhospitable land, unfit for settlement. On the other hand, Arctic expeditions were the source of a vast number of narratives which relayed the exploits of the explorers and the environment in which they found themselves. These accounts, widely available across Europe, contained graphic, detailed descriptions of the perils of the landscape, interactions with its people, meteorological phenomena and general

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<sup>9</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company* (London: 1857): 48.

<sup>10</sup> Adriana Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster: Authorship and Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 134-37; Theodore Karamanski, *The Fur Trade and Exploration: Opening the Far Northwest, 1821-1852* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 10.

impressions of the great northern frontier of the British Empire, which were generally similar to those provided by the HBC.<sup>11</sup>

What these accounts did not contain was a clear geographic definition of what the Arctic actually was, nor an accurate account of its people. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Arctic was vaguely defined as the northern part of the continent, as opposed to the more modern definitions based on specific climactic and geographic features.<sup>12</sup> Although it included the High Arctic, Sub-Arctic, Hudson Bay coast, and northern parts of the boreal forest, the European conception of the Arctic during this period effectively defined it as the vast uncharted and nearly non-penetrated territory in the northern part of the globe, a homogenous “Arctic Zone.”<sup>13</sup>

The “Arctic Zone”, covering as it did a massive and geographically disparate region, became an ideological construction within the European imagination as an icy frontier. Although it was a real place that was diverse as it was large, European perceptions of the north presented a place that was an ultimate location of the encounter between the European world—civilized, ordered and Christian—and the non-European world—wild, unbridled and non-Christian—exemplified by the celebrated entry of explorers into a

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<sup>11</sup> Cavell, *Connected Narrative*, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Coates, *Canada's Colonies*, 32; Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 13.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Hood in John Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea, in the Years 1819, 20, 21 and 22* (London: John Murray, 1823), 175.

hostile and 'alien' territory. The inability of Europeans to tame the region, and by extension, a failure to push the frontier through the development of permanent European presence, allowed it to retain its status as a contact zone throughout the nineteenth century.

This position was firmly entrenched in written and visual representations of the Arctic where the dominant theme was that of the sublime—that genre characterized by the vastness of space, the unknown and the emotional responses of awe and fear which was particularly well-suited to the Arctic.<sup>14</sup> As a genre, the sublime was consistently used in representations of global exploration to create fantasies of the exotic in both tropical and hyperborean settings, with particular concern for creating contrast between the European and the unknown.<sup>15</sup> It presented quite vividly the idea of a frontier and, by extension, the lands beyond the frontier, both real and imagined. The Arctic, characterized after William Parry's 1819 expedition as "a region which had never before been seen by any civilized beings,"<sup>16</sup> was well-suited to this sort of representation because its landscape was alien and dangerous, something exacerbated by the strangeness of northern natural phenomena, its perceived infertility, and the fact that

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<sup>14</sup> See for example, John Rae, *The Arctic Journals of John Rae*, ed. Ken McGoogan, 140; C.C. Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime," in *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, ed. V.C. Knoepfelmacher and G.B. Tennyson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 95; Francis Spufford, *'I May be Some Time': Ice and the English Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 27.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, *Imagining*, 10; Wilton and Barringer, *American Sublime*, 40.

<sup>16</sup> "Remarks on Captain Parry's Expedition," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 44, no. 8 (November 1820): 219.

transport and communication were extremely difficult, separating the Arctic spatially and environmentally from European knowledge and experience.<sup>17</sup>

Accounts came primarily from Arctic explorers and were generally factual with a scientific focus. Nevertheless, they often made direct and unfavourable comparisons with the known worlds of Britain and Europe.<sup>18</sup> For example, in the narrative of his 1819-1820 voyage, Parry wrote that the Arctic possessed “a silence far different from the peaceable composure which characterizes the landscape of a cultivate country; it was the deathlike stillness of the most dreary desolation and the total absence of animated existence.”<sup>19</sup> Parry’s description was powerful, reinforcing the ideas of the unfamiliar and irreconcilable nature of this landscape with those at home.

Texts such as Parry’s were complemented by visual representation. Vivid illustrations often accompanied travel narratives or were sometimes published as separate plates. Like their textual counterparts, they presented images of a sublime frontier through representations of a difficult landscape. Images by W.H. Browne, for example, published in 1850, employed techniques of the sublime to show the interactions between people

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<sup>17</sup> David, *British Imagination*, 87; Loomis, “Arctic Sublime,” 102.

<sup>18</sup> Russel A. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles: The Frozen North in Visual Culture, 1818-1875* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 55.

<sup>19</sup> William Edward Parry, *Journal of a Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific: Performed in the Years 1819-20* (London: J. Murray, 1821), 125.

and the environment.<sup>20</sup> His image entitled *The Bivouac, Cape Seppings*, (fig. 1.2), in particular, exemplifies this relationship through the complete dwarfing of the exploratory party by a massive vertical rock face within a landscape where Europeans had very little impact because of the sheer power and size of the natural world.

The north also took on moral and religious overtones, being seen as both pre-Christian and amoral due to the chaos perceived as inherent to the environment. In 1851, William Kennedy, the commander of the *Prince Albert*, distinctly alluded to the idea of the north as outside the Christian imagination, even comparing it to “Milton’s Pandemonium.”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, his second-in-command, Joseph-René Bellot, wrote: “Moral nature seems to have abdicated, there is nothing left but a chaos without purpose.”<sup>22</sup> Both Bellot and Kennedy placed the Arctic not just outside the European environment, but also outside the Christian spiritual realm. This association was strengthened by scripture where the call of Jeremiah, recorded in Jeremiah 1:13-14, explicitly stated that evil came from the north. Hence, explorers not only saw themselves as grappling with the harsh environment but also its perceived godlessness and sinfulness. On his overland expeditions in the 1820s, for example, John Franklin, and surgeon John Richardson, emphasized the importance of Christian faith in tackling the landscape and

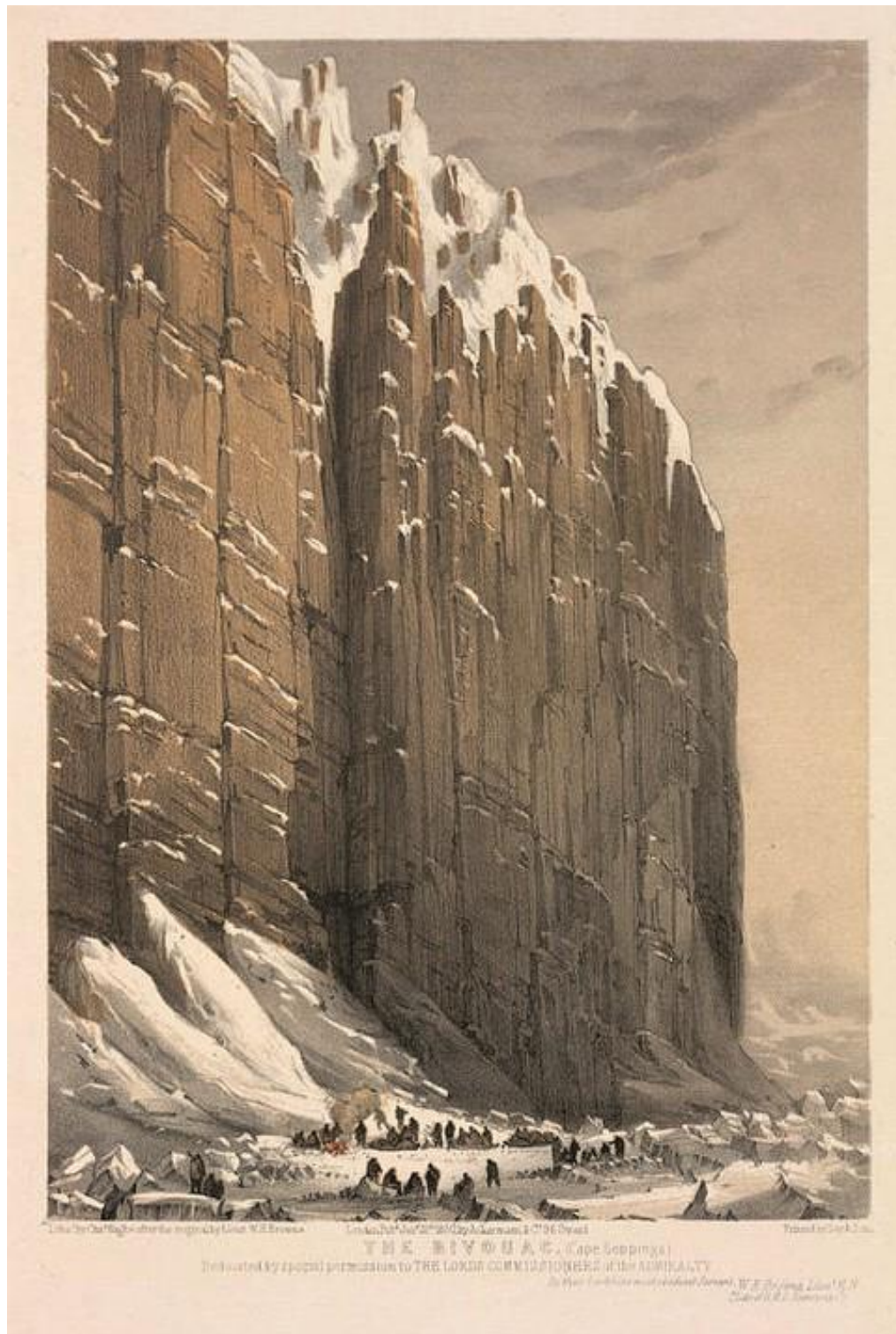
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<sup>20</sup> I.S. Maclaren, “The Aesthetic Map of the North: 1845-1859,” in *Interpreting Canada’s North: Selected Readings*, ed. Kenneth S. Coates and William R. Morrison (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989) 23-26.

<sup>21</sup> William Kennedy, *A Short Narrative of the Second Voyage of the Prince Albert in Search of Sir John Franklin* (London: W.H. Dalton, 1853), 106.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph-René Bellot, *Journal d’un Voyage aux Mers Polaires: Exécuté à la recherche de Sir John Franklin, en 1851 et 1852* (Paris: Perrotin, 1854), 91. “La nature morale semble avoir abdiqué, il n’y a plus qu’un chaos sans raison d’être.”





1.2: William J. Browne, *The Bivouac, Cape Seppings*, 1850, in W.H. Browne, *Ten Coloured Views Taken During the Arctic Expedition...under the Command of Captain James C. Ross*, 1850.



surviving, transporting religious texts with them.<sup>23</sup> Through this association, the Arctic frontier took on an extra spiritual dimension, where it could be viewed as the contact zone between God and Satan. This was particularly important given the belief that the British Empire was expanded providentially through God's blessing, giving success in penetrating the Arctic a more significant weight for both God and Empire.

Explorers responded to the sublimity of the north by trying to transform it through the creation of 'civilized' space. The erection of temporary buildings was undertaken on overwintering expeditions to impose a level of civilization on the landscape through the recreation of familiar space and activities. A painting by J. Coventry (fig. 1.3) which appeared as the frontispiece to P.C. Sutherland's published Journal illustrates the recreation of European life on the north, showing a group of men playing games near a cluster of cottage-like ice huts.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the buildings erected at Fort Enterprise on Franklin's first overland expedition were likewise described in European terms, with Richardson describing one as "a stately dwelling" of "respectable appearance."<sup>25</sup> Nor was this practice confined to the nineteenth century. The stone house erected on

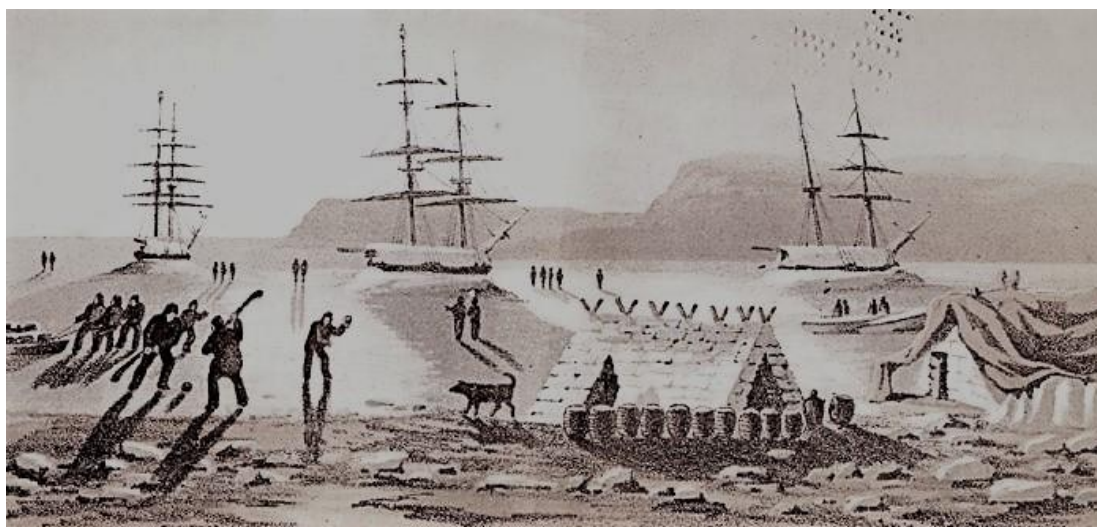
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<sup>23</sup> Franklin, *Narrative*, 258; John Richardson, *Arctic Ordeal: The Journal of John Richardson, Surgeon-Naturalist with Franklin, 1820-1822*, ed. C. Stuart Houston (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 148; Janice Cavell, "Lady Lucy Berry and Evangelical Reading on the First Franklin Expedition," *Arctic* 63 (2010): 134-35; I.S. Maclaren, "Retaining Captivity of the Soul: Responses to Nature in the First Franklin Expedition," *Essays on Canadian Writing* 28 (1984): 57-92; Richard Blake, *Religion in the British Navy, 1815-1879: Piety and Professionalism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 200-201; Peter Davidson, *The Idea of North* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 189.

<sup>24</sup> Maclaren, "Aesthetic Map," 31.

<sup>25</sup> John Richardson in John McIlraith, *The Life of Sir John Richardson* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1868), 80

Kodlunarn Island in 1576 by Frobisher's men was described in glowing terms as a



1.3: J. Coventry. Frontispiece in Peter Sutherland, *Journal of a Voyage in Baffin's Bay and the Barrow Straits in the Years 1850-1851*.

reproduction of Elizabethan life, as explorers attempted to enact some sort of modification on the environment.<sup>26</sup>

Explorers also tried to find civilization within the landscape by searching out places which could be approached on more familiar terms. They did this by imposing notions of the picturesque upon it, a genre represented by the controlled and composed pastoral landscape.<sup>27</sup> An example of this can be seen at Fort Enterprise, which Franklin's party chose as an overwintering point because of its picturesque qualities.<sup>28</sup> Midshipman Robert Hood wrote "the beauty of the situation far exceeded our most sanguine

<sup>26</sup> George Best, *The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher, in Search of a Passage to Cathaia and India, by the North-West, A.D. 1576-8*, ed. Richard Collinson (London: Hakluyt Society, 1867), 272.

<sup>27</sup> Maclaren, "Aesthetic Map," 19; David Lowenthal and Hugh C. Price, "English Landscape Tastes," *Geographical Review* 55, no. 2 (1965): 192.

<sup>28</sup> Maclaren, "Aesthetic Map," 20-21.



1.4: Robert Hood, *Construction of Fort Enterprise on the Winter River, in the North-West Territories*, 1820. Library and Archives Canada, C-040327

expectations”<sup>29</sup> alluding to the gentle, somewhat familiar landscape set in contrast to the Barren Lands (fig. 1.4). Richardson, dismissing much of the country as “a barren subject”,<sup>30</sup> even drew comparisons to the English Lake District.<sup>31</sup>

Both the construction of buildings and the imposition of the picturesque were a reaction to the landscape and a desire to impose the ‘civilized’, known world onto the north. These developments showed that civilization could advance into the ‘unknown’, even in

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Hood, *To the Arctic By Canoe: The Journal and Paintings of Robert Hood*, ed. C. Stuart Houston (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1974), 145.

<sup>30</sup> Richardson in McIlraith, *Richardson*, 83.

<sup>31</sup> Richardson in McIlraith, *Richardson*, 79.

a limited capacity. Explorers established a contact zone and pockets of transformation within the landscape in firm belief of the positive nature of European interaction and intervention.<sup>32</sup>

The Arctic narrative was also shaped by the people within it, both European and indigenous, whose contact with each other reinforced the role of the far north as a place of encounter. Explorers took on the part of the 'Christian hero', exemplifying virtues of courage, morality and sacrifice for the expansion of empire. As enthusiasm for Arctic exploration began to wane in light of the Franklin disaster, the *Illustrated London News* defended exploration through the character of the men who undertook them, writing:

The history of Arctic adventure and discovery forms a noble chapter in the history of Great Britain. Among all the brilliant deeds of our countrymen, by sea and land from the days of Elizabeth to those of Victoria, the achievements of such men as Ross, Parry, Franklin and, last of all, McClintock, and their brave comrades, stand out pre-eminent for unselfish heroism and for almost epical grandeur.<sup>33</sup>

Explorers represented Britain, its achievements in the global sphere, and its values, particularly self-sacrifice in pursuit of a greater cause. They also exemplified the concept of Christian manliness: strong, vigorous, masculine enterprise embodied by unwavering faith and moral courage.<sup>34</sup> In a godless environment, like the Arctic, forward action driven by Christian moral and spiritual values defined men described as "the great van-

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<sup>32</sup> Wilton and Barringer, *American Sublime*, 58; Houston, "Introduction" in Hood, *Arctic*, xxxi.

<sup>33</sup> *Illustrated London News* (1 Oct. 1859), 316.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Imagining*, 234; Norman Vance, *Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 8; Spufford, *Ice*, 147.

leaders of civilization”<sup>35</sup> and who continued their mission even through the greatest spiritual and physical adversity.<sup>36</sup> It was through agents imbued with these characteristics that the frontier was seen to be both created and forwarded and through their positive virtues that the enterprise was given legitimacy as part of the expansion of a Christian empire.

In contrast to explorers were indigenous people who were seen as being uncivilized and integrated into the wider landscape. Although representing three broad groups of indigenous people—the Inuit, Dene and Cree—they were often lumped together in a single homogenous group, echoing the perceived homogeneity of the landscape, despite early nineteenth-century recognition of linguistic and cultural differences.<sup>37</sup> In this singular group, they were cast in the role of the ‘Noble Savage’, the popular European trope of the ignorant, but uncorrupted and innocent indigene.<sup>38</sup> In depictions and descriptions, indigenous people, but particularly the Inuit, were contrasted with the ‘civilization’ of noble Christian explorers, as stereotypical representations of indigenous people (fig. 1.5).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “Arctic Enterprise,” *The Spectator* (23 February 1850): 14.

<sup>36</sup> Cavell, *Connected Narrative*, 133.

<sup>37</sup> Morgan, “Encounters,” 47; Den Otter, *Civilizing*, 224.

<sup>38</sup> Pagden, *European Encounters*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Catherine Cormier, “In the Name of Science, Entertainment and Empire: British Stereotypes of Eastern Arctic Inuit from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century,” (M.A. Thesis, Laurentian University, 2004), 79.



**1.5:** John Sacheuse, “First Communication with the Natives of Prince Regents Bay”, 1818. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, PX7970

Like the land they inhabited, indigenous people were viewed as unpredictable and potentially dangerous.<sup>40</sup> They added an element of the unknown and the exotic to the northern environment and Europeans saw interactions with them as an extension of their interactions with the environment.<sup>41</sup> Their lifestyle was consistently viewed as analogous to the unfamiliarity and savageness of the land; this can be seen by the fact that, with the notable exception of John Rae, explorers resolutely refused to use native technology even in situations where it was indispensable for survival, seeing it as

<sup>40</sup> Axtell, *European*, 41.

<sup>41</sup> For example: George Back, *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River, and Along the Shores of the Arctic Ocean in the Years 1833, 1834 and 1835* (London: John Murray, 1836), 79; Best, *Three Voyages*, 73.

compromising civilized values.<sup>42</sup> For Europeans, indigenous people and their environment were an interconnected, alien other, which stood in stark contrast to the forces of ‘progress’ bearing down upon them.

### *Missionaries in the North*

As the European public looked to the north as a vast, uncharted wilderness, so did missionary organizations, seeing a land ripe for the Gospel and a people in need of Christ. From the earliest entry of missionaries into Rupert’s Land, the north had been the major focus and ultimate goal of their mission.<sup>43</sup> Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Québec, instructed the first Catholic missionaries in the west that the Church was “looking to the gradual spread of our holy faith over the immense western region, which separates North America from the Pacific Ocean.”<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the first CMS missionary at Red River, John West, articulated his desire to spread the Gospel “among the northern Indians and those west of the Rocky Mountains”<sup>45</sup> even suggesting reaching the Inuit when the CMS had a single mission in southern Rupert’s Land.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> McGoogan, “About John Rae,” in *Arctic Journals*, 311.

<sup>43</sup> Levasseur, *Les Oblats*, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph-Octave Plessis to Canadian Catholic clergy, 29 March 1818, in Grace Lee Nute (ed.), *Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions, 1815-1827* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), 38. “...à répandre graduellement notre sainte foi sur l’immense territoire de l’Ouest qui sépare l’Amérique Septentrionale d’avec la mer Pacifique.”

<sup>45</sup> John West to HBC Northern Committee, 5 June 1822, CMSA-C/C1/M1.

<sup>46</sup> West Journal, 5 June 1823; West to HBC Secretary, 29 August 1823, CMSA-C/C1/M1.

Although missionary organizations desired to spread the Gospel around the world, the north was seen as a particularly important goal in fulfilling Christ's commandment to spread the gospel to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) due to the belief that its fulfilment would herald Christ's return.<sup>47</sup> At home and in the field, the CMS and OMI were urged towards the far north. Jean-Baptiste Thibault, a secular priest who itinerated widely through northern Alberta and Saskatchewan in the mid-1840s wrote to Joseph-Norbert Provencher, Bishop of Saint-Boniface, in 1845, urging him to make the north the focus of Catholic activity, naming the northern missions as "the most important of all those in your Apostolic Vicariate."<sup>48</sup>

In his 1888 text, *Diocese of Mackenzie River*, its bishop, William Carpenter Bompas, wrote of the allure of the north for missionaries, stating:

The Mackenzie River may be regarded as the Ultima Thule, and, in some respects as the forlorn hope of Missionary Enterprise; for no zeal can tame the elements, or soften the rigours of an Arctic clime. Still, however, the Gospel wins its triumphs amid Arctic snows, and shows itself sufficient for the comfort of the wanderer in the North.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Pierre-Henri Grollier to Alexandre Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1971.0220-202; Edmund Peck, 11 August 1891, *AL* (1891), 141; Huel, *Proclaiming*, 10; Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 3; Grant, "European Enclaves," 273.

<sup>48</sup> Jean-Baptiste Thibault to Joseph-Norbert Provencher, 24 July 1845, AASB-P2740. "les plus importantes de toutes celles que se cont dans notre vicariate apostolique."

<sup>49</sup> Bompas, *Mackenzie River*, 106.



In the north, missionaries could quite literally follow the commandment “to preach the gospel to the regions beyond” (2 Cor 10:16) and success represented a great triumph for Christianity.<sup>50</sup> Bompas presented it as beyond the boundaries of the known world, consistent with contemporary representation, and certainly outside of the Christian sphere. Because of this, the work of northern missionaries was viewed as apostolic and of a “superior order”<sup>51</sup> to those elsewhere, in a place where “the sacrifices and suffering of those noble missionaries...is to repeat the story of the Apostles in their conquest of the heathen world.”<sup>52</sup>

As in other fields, part of the desire to bring the gospel to the north was to atone for the sins of other Europeans against indigenous people, in this case the HBC.<sup>53</sup> For the CMS, this was particularly poignant as the HBC was the imperial agent of an empire to which they were attached, and the Company had received particularly negative attention in their approach to indigenous people given the pervasive belief that it was the duty of empire to Christianize its subjects and the fact that the HBC had no interest in doing so.<sup>54</sup> But the north held a greater allure for both organizations because of its remoteness, its romance and its place as a frontier where the Christian and non-

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<sup>50</sup> David Anderson, *The Gospel in the Regions Beyond* (London: Hatchards, 1874), 12.

<sup>51</sup> Mazenod to Ricard, 6 December 1851, in Eugène de Mazenod, *Lettres aux correspondants d'Amérique, 1851-1860* (Rome: Postulation générale O.M.I., 1977), 2:31. “...ordre supérieur...”

<sup>52</sup> *Notes sur les Missions de Nord-Ouest*, n.d., LAC-MG17-17/M2088. “les sacrifices et la souffrance de ces nobles missionnaires...c’est répéter l’histoire des apôtres dans leur conquête de monde sauvage.”

<sup>53</sup> Pierre Aubert, “Voyage à la Rivière Rouge en 1845,” *Missions* 2 (1863): 194; Barker, “Missionary Frontier,” 102.

<sup>54</sup> A.K. Isbister, *A Few Words on the Hudson’s Bay Company: with a Statement of Grievances of the Native and Half-Caste Indians* (London: C. Gilpin, 1846), 1; Brown, *Providence*, 196.

Christian world collided. Here, missionaries believed they could succeed in pushing the frontier though successful evangelization and the introduction of God into a godless landscape.

One of the clearest indications of the European obsession with the Arctic was the sheer amount of resources thrust towards it in light of results achieved. Despite significant success with regard to mapping, nineteenth-century explorers had yet to find a Northwest Passage but still persisted in their search.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, missionaries were consistently drawn into the territory, despite the extremely high costs of northern missions and questions with regards to their financial viability.<sup>56</sup> Henry Venn, CMS Secretary from 1843 to 1871, was particularly concerned over the costs, but still defended the missions, writing:

If it has been justly esteemed an enterprise worth much sacrifice of treasure and life to search through these very regions for the unburied bones of Franklin and his brave companions, surely the Church of Christ cannot refuse to send forth its messengers.<sup>57</sup>

As an answer to the ultimate call of the Great Commission, therefore, northern mission was justifiable regardless of cost and difficulty.

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<sup>55</sup> Glyndwr Williams, *Voyages of Delusion: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 370.

<sup>56</sup> Higham, *Redeemable*, 109.

<sup>57</sup> Henry Venn (1860) in Eugene Stock, *A History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, its Men and its Work* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 2:331.

Like explorers, northern missionaries were cast as manly, heroic pioneers of Christ. This perception allowed missionaries to take on an exploratory role in advancing the northern frontier as they ranged “in the polar regions, discovering the savages that they have to save.”<sup>58</sup> That some missionaries, such as Father Émile Petitot, undertook long exploratory journeys and wrote about them increased this association.<sup>59</sup> Their association with the idea of Christian manliness was amplified by the fact that, when compared to other mission fields, there were very few women in this mission field, particularly in its early years.<sup>60</sup> Although performing important work, women in the north, including missionary wives and the Sisters of Charity of Montréal, were designated a supporting role in expansion, creating the perception of a masculine field in the north where evangelization and survival were at their most difficult.<sup>61</sup>

The conversion of indigenous people was the primary goal of both missionary organizations but the narratives of a barren, godless land made the transformation of

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<sup>58</sup> Mazenod to Ricard, 6 December 1851, *Lettres*, 2:31. “...dans les régions glaciales pour découvrir les Sauvages qu’ils ont à sauver.” See also: Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:86.

<sup>59</sup> For example: Émile Petitot, “The Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory,” *Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society* 15, no. 2 (1883): 728-29.

<sup>60</sup> Rutherford, *White Man’s God*, 4-12; C.J. W.-L. Wee, “Christian Manliness and National Identity: The Problematic Construction of a Racially ‘Pure’ Nation,” in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 68; Allan K. Davidson, “Useful Industry and Muscular Christianity: George Augustus Selwyn and his Early Years in New Zealand,” in *The Use and Abuse of Time in Christian History*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 289.

<sup>61</sup> Maughan, *Mighty England*, 144; Higham, *Redeemable*, 45; Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Duchaussois, *The Grey Nuns in the Far North, 1867-1917* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1919), 33; Provencher to Conseil Central de l’Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi, [1847], *Rapport sur les Missions du Diocèse du Québec* 7 (1847): 50. The Sisters of Charity of Montréal are more commonly known as the Grey Nuns and this is how they will be referred to throughout this study.

the landscape an integral aspect of northern missions.<sup>62</sup> Only through the transformation of both people and landscape could a truly Christian society be constructed. William Mason, a Methodist missionary who defected to the CMS' mission at York Factory in 1854, explicitly viewed the north in this way, describing the Hudson Bay coast as "dreary Territories which afford a precarious living to man and beast, in an uncivilized and wild state, but are incapable of yielding provisions to serve the wants of a large, settled, civilized community."<sup>63</sup>

Mason explicitly viewed the land on negative terms, seeing it in opposition to the familiar, civilized English countryside.<sup>64</sup> The idea that the land was empty and infertile was extremely pervasive in nineteenth-century missionary dialogue, even if this view was inaccurate. After experiencing the Mackenzie region for the first time in 1862, Petitot write to his superiors: "You imagine, I think, the arid lands, the vast plains without end covered in snow, the dreary lakes. Thus I imagined as well."<sup>65</sup> But, on his arrival, Petitot was "enchanted by the lands of Hudson's Bay" even going so far as to say "I am not afraid to say that this land is beautiful, three times beautiful, although of an

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<sup>62</sup> Francis, "Civilizing," 87.

<sup>63</sup> William Mason to George Simpson, 20 June 1849, Wesleyan Missionary Archives, quoted in Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 31.

<sup>64</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 43.

<sup>65</sup> Petitot to Frères Scholastique, 23 July 1862, *Missions* 2 (1863): 215. "Vous vous figurez, je pense, des lands arides, de vastes plaines sans cesse couverts de neige, des lac mornes. C'est ainsi que je me l'imaginai aussi."

almost complete infertility.”<sup>66</sup> Petitot’s expectations were clearly shaped by Arctic narratives’ strong bias towards the High Arctic and, even after visiting the region and recognizing its breadth and diversity, he was no less convinced that it was both wild and barren, despite its aesthetic qualities.

Infertility was a central theme in nineteenth century discussions about the Arctic. It was viewed as a distinctly negative attribute because, as Mason articulated, infertility did not allow for the growth of Christian communities and the transformation of the land to suit European norms, with regard to the introduction of agriculture. However, the idea of infertility also took on a specific theological dimension when viewed in light of biblical narratives of wilderness, cultivation and settlement which directly informed how missionaries approached their task.

European perceptions of pre-Christian North America hinged on its role as a wilderness, an important paradigm in both Hebrew and Christian scriptures.<sup>67</sup> Land was a central theme in Hebrew scriptures, in particular, where wilderness was identified as dark and ungodly.<sup>68</sup> Missionaries’ understanding of landscape drew heavily on Old Testament narratives where wilderness, or desert, and the presence of people within it was seen as

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<sup>66</sup> Petitot to Frères Scholastique 23 July 1862, 215. “...enchanté des terres de la baie d’Hudson...je ne crains pas d’affirmer que ce pays est beau, trois fois beau, quoique d’une stérilité presque complete.”

<sup>67</sup> G.H. Williams, “Wilderness and Paradise in the History of the Church,” *Church History* 28, no. 1 (1959): 14.

<sup>68</sup> Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8; Sivasindarum, *Godly Empire*, 172.

a sign of God's displeasure or even absence due to a lack of faith or sin and missionary narratives drew heavily on this metaphor in their discussions of mission.<sup>69</sup> Initially found in the expulsion from the Garden narrative (Gen 3:23), the wilderness theme is most strongly found in the wandering of the Israelites in the desert due to God's displeasure over their disobedience (Num 32:13). In both passages, wilderness was presented as a punishment for sin, whereas fertile land signalled God's pleasure and presence, signified most strongly by Eden and Canaan.<sup>70</sup> In this theme, a very clear dichotomy was drawn between the two different types of landscapes and given explicit spiritual interpretation.

Since the seventeenth century, the North American wilderness had been consistently perceived in religious thought as an extension of the scriptural wilderness.<sup>71</sup> West, for example, identified the North American wilderness as a place where "the prince of darkness seems to have reigned with almost undisturbed Dominion from the creation of the world."<sup>72</sup> That the land was so vast amplified this perception of a physical and spiritual "wilderness without end."<sup>73</sup> As a result, an explicit goal of Christian organizations in North America was the transformation of the wilderness into a paradise, a conversion of the land through reconciliation with God. Interestingly, this was seen as possible because of the belief that, despite God's absence, the wilderness was

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<sup>69</sup> Nash, *Wilderness*, 13-15; Habel, *Land Ideologies*, 135.

<sup>70</sup> G.H. Williams "The Wilderness and Paradise in the History of the Church," *Church History* 28, no. 1 (1959): 11; Stankey, "Wilderness Concept," 10-11.

<sup>71</sup> Nash, *Wilderness*, 24; Taylor, "Landscape Experience," 85.

<sup>72</sup> West to Budd, 26 November 1823, CMSA-C/C1/M1. See also: Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 25.

<sup>73</sup> *Notes*, LAC-MG17-17/M-2088.

nevertheless part of creation.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the wilderness also manifested itself in Scripture as a space of spiritual testing where Christians could grow in faith through suffering, a theme that was consistently emphasized in both Anglican and Catholic missionary writing.<sup>75</sup> The arrival of missionaries, therefore, was seen as a step towards the redemption of the land to bring it back into the fold of creation, despite its inherent difficulties.<sup>76</sup> As a result, the conversion of landscape became a central focus in northern missions in order to transform the land from barren to fertile and, by extension, godless to faithful, although this desire was also actively applied in missions in both Africa and the Pacific.<sup>77</sup>

Like explorers, missionaries also made clear connections between the land and the character of indigenous people; Alexandre Taché, who became Vicar Apostolic of Saint-Boniface in 1853, wrote: “there is something wild in their way of life.”<sup>78</sup> The nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle of most First Nations communities led missionaries to make associations between the unfamiliarity of the landscape and the perceived unpredictability of indigenous migration, concluding that, like their environment,

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<sup>74</sup> Bompas, *Mackenzie River*, 105.

<sup>75</sup> David Anderson, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of Rupert's Land at His Primary Visitation* (London: T. Hatchard, 1851), 27; Alexandre Taché, *Vingt Années de Mission dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique* (Montréal: Eusèbe Senécal, 1866), 80.

<sup>76</sup> Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 160.

<sup>77</sup> Robley Edward Whitson, “Wilderness and Paradise: Symbols of American Wilderness Experience,” *Religion and Intellectual Life* 5 (1987), 8; Stankey, “Wilderness Concept,” 11; Samson, “Landscape,” 93; Mackenzie, “Missionaries,” 112-13.

<sup>78</sup> Alexandre Taché, *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique* (Montréal : Nouveau Monde, 1869), 73. “...il y a quelque chose de sauvage dans leur genre de vie.”

indigenous people would have to be transformed in order to become Christians.

However, like looking for the picturesque in the landscape, missionaries also attempted to look for the familiar in native people in order to demonstrate that they were both convertible and redeemable.<sup>79</sup>

The overriding belief amongst missionaries was that indigenous people were in a state of human infancy, similar to that of pre-Christian Europe, and, through evangelization, could be converted to Christianity and civilization.<sup>80</sup> For missionaries, indigenous communities had not yet achieved their potential due to a lack of Christian knowledge, but could be elevated through teaching and preaching. However, early English settlers in the American colonies encountering indigenous people had struggled to place them within the collective human past, questioning how they got there and what their relationship was to the known world. As a result, the idea arose that indigenous people were descended from the lost tribes of Israel, an idea that gained significant traction and continued to exert influence into the nineteenth century.<sup>81</sup> The inability to trace the ancestry of native people through historical records and their nomadic lifestyle made this a powerful undercurrent in the European approach to indigenous people. Missionaries saw this as an indication that indigenous people were fundamentally

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<sup>79</sup> Higham, *Redeemable*, 181.

<sup>80</sup> Axtell, *European*, 43; Pagden, *European Encounters*, 117.

<sup>81</sup> Richard W. Cogley, "The Ancestry of the American Indians: Thomas Thorowgood's *Jews in America* (1650) and *Jews in America* (1660)," *English Literary Renaissance* 35, no. 2 (2005): 306; Den Otter, *Civilizing*, 71.



redeemable and went to great length to find connections between indigenous and Hebrew language and culture.<sup>82</sup> This idea remained strong throughout the northern missions with missionaries convinced that indigenous people were, in at least some way, the “children of Jacob.”<sup>83</sup> Some missionaries, particularly the Oblates, also promoted the idea of a pre-Christian spirituality, due to the general belief by many indigenous people of higher power, which was viewed as being instilled by God to allow indigenous people to experience revelation and accept the Christian message.<sup>84</sup>

These perceptions of the land and its people set a clear mandate for missionary activity in the north: the transformation of both the land and its people, which Father Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Duchaussois called “the glory of Christian religion.”<sup>85</sup> Through evangelism and conversion, it was hoped that the wilderness would be transformed into a paradise full of God’s blessing and its people brought to Christ. However, this mission necessarily included a civilizing aspect and it was understood by both organizations that their goal was to ‘convert and civilize’, even when this was not explicitly acknowledged.<sup>86</sup> The idea of civilization was applied to both people and landscape. Land was to be changed from unfamiliar and wild to cultivated and tamed; likewise, indigenous people were to

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<sup>82</sup> Williams “Wilderness and Paradise,” 8; McCarthy, *Great River*, 74; Gilles Cadrin “Le Père Émile Petitot l’origine des peuples d’Amérique: polygénisme and monogénisme,” *Francophonies d’Amérique* 2 (1992): 139-49; William Carpenter Bompas, *Northern Lights on the Bible: Drawn from the Bishop’s Experience During Twenty-Five Years in the Great North-West* (London: J. Nisbet and Co., n.d), 41.

<sup>83</sup> Auguste Charpeney to [unknown], 30 December 1859, *Missions* 2 (1863): 109. “des enfants de Jacob”

<sup>84</sup> Gualtieri, “Missionary Perceptions,” 308; Émile Petitot, “Étude sur la nation Montagnais,” *Missions* 6 (1867): 505-508; McDonald to Long, 31 January 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O45/7.

<sup>85</sup> Duchaussois, *Grey Nuns*, 238.

<sup>86</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 9.

transition from nomadic to settled. Through this conversion, both the wilderness and indigenous people were to become both Christian and civilized.

Missionaries believed that these changes would occur through a number of channels. At the most basic, they believed that conversion to Christianity alone enacted spiritual change and a basic level of civilization through the inculcation of European moral and social norms, especially those related to family life.<sup>87</sup> However, the holistic transformation of both people and landscape also required temporal intervention in the form of modification to lifestyle and environment through cultivation and building in order to reorient people and land towards a European standard.

Indigenous peoples' perceived level of civilization was intimately connected to their economic activities, specifically trapping, hunting, and fishing which missionaries viewed as affording a precarious existence, especially when compared to the relative stability of agriculture associated with biblical metaphors of cultivation.<sup>88</sup> The cultivated garden, originating in Eden, was seen as the ultimate sign of God's blessing and the desire to cultivate the land drew from this understanding. Missionaries believed that a landscape brought under the plough was the most pleasing to God and brought both temporal and

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<sup>87</sup> Sivasundarum, *Godly Empire*, 161; Gunson, *Messengers*, 268.

<sup>88</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:121.

spiritual benefits to its inhabitants.<sup>89</sup> The language they used to describe their missions aptly demonstrated this as missionaries spoke frequently using agricultural language and metaphors for evangelism and conversion, promoting cultivation and rejecting the natural landscape.<sup>90</sup> Many missionaries also felt that the harsh environment inherently led to a lack of morality and spirituality because of the need of indigenous people to focus on survival; as a result, the land needed to be changed in order to allow indigenous people to contemplate anything other than their immediate wants.<sup>91</sup> The reordering of the environment also symbolized the desire of missionaries to transform the Arctic spiritually through the creation of a landscape that more closely the Edenic ideal.

### *Architecture and Civilization*

The other facet of civilizing the landscape and people was building. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, this became increasingly important in the far north because the climate of much of the region rendered it unsuitable to widespread cultivation.<sup>92</sup> It was the prevailing belief that buildings brought a landscape to completion by subduing

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<sup>89</sup> A.A. Den Otter, "'The Wilderness Will Rejoice and Blossom Like the Crocus': Bishop David Anderson's Perceptions of Wilderness and Civilization in Rupert's Land," *Historical Papers: Canadian Church Historical Society* (2001): 86; Hovland, *Mission Station*, 45; Mackenzie, "Missionaries," 110-11.

<sup>90</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, xxv.

<sup>91</sup> Gualtieri, "Missionary Perceptions," 306.

<sup>92</sup> *Report of the Select Committee of the Senate Appointed to Enquire Into the Resources of the Great Mackenzie Basin* (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlain, 1888), 138-39.

nature through human intervention and reflected the values and beliefs of the people within them; therefore, the buildings and settlements of Europe represented the 'civilized', Christian community.<sup>93</sup> In contrast, indigenous buildings were seen as material representation of non-Christian life because of their portability, and an extension of wilderness.

Within European discourse, indigenous architecture was explicitly linked to the pre-Christian world and was consistently represented as such in visual culture, particularly when contrasted with European buildings. Paul Kane, an Irish-Canadian artist who travelled across much of western Canada with the HBC, recorded this contrast in his painting *Fort Edmonton* (1849-56; fig. 1.6) which juxtaposes the fort with a group of tepees, emphasizing the differences in permanence, construction and scale.<sup>94</sup> Kane also used light and elevation to demonstrate a shift from dark and uncivilized existence to an enlightened and civilized one as represented through architectural forms. Later photographs, particularly ones of northern missions, also showed this dichotomy, contrasting imposing ecclesiastical architecture with indigenous encampments (fig. 1.7).<sup>95</sup> Both photographs and other images showed the differences between architectural typologies and represented the divergent levels of civilization between Europeans and non-Europeans. Architecture, therefore, was not only a physical marker

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<sup>93</sup> Sivasindarum, *Godly Empire*, 148; Seed, *Ceremonies*, 15-16; Samson, "Landscapes," 92.

<sup>94</sup> Arlene Gehmacher, *Paul Kane: Life and Work* (Toronto: Art Institute of Canada, 2013), 28.

<sup>95</sup> Anne-Hélène Kerebiriou, *Les Indiens de l'Ouest Canadien Vus par les Oblats, 1885-1930* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1996), 148.



1.6: Paul Kane, *Fort Edmonton*, 1849-56. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

of indigenous and non-indigenous space, but also an ideological one, marking out Christian and non-Christian worlds.<sup>96</sup>

That this was a pervasive view in nineteenth-century Europe can be represented no more vividly than by the depiction of indigenous architectural types at world's fairs and expositions, where they were presented as tangible representations of the perceived evolution of civilization and society.<sup>97</sup> At one of the most well-known of these exhibits, the *Histoire de l'Habitation Humaine* at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris, a range of non-European and ancient buildings, including examples from North America (fig.

<sup>96</sup> Neylan, *Heavens*, 236.

<sup>97</sup> Raymond Corbey, "Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930," *Cultural Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (1993): 342.



1.7: Roman Catholic Mission, Fort Resolution. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P-7559-213*.

1.8), were presented in a typological display, providing contrast to the European buildings surrounding them and identifying material culture as an indicator of progress.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, buildings from the pre-Christian era in Europe were also included as primitive structures, implying that not only did these structures represent so-called primitive societies, they also represented non-Christian ones.<sup>99</sup>

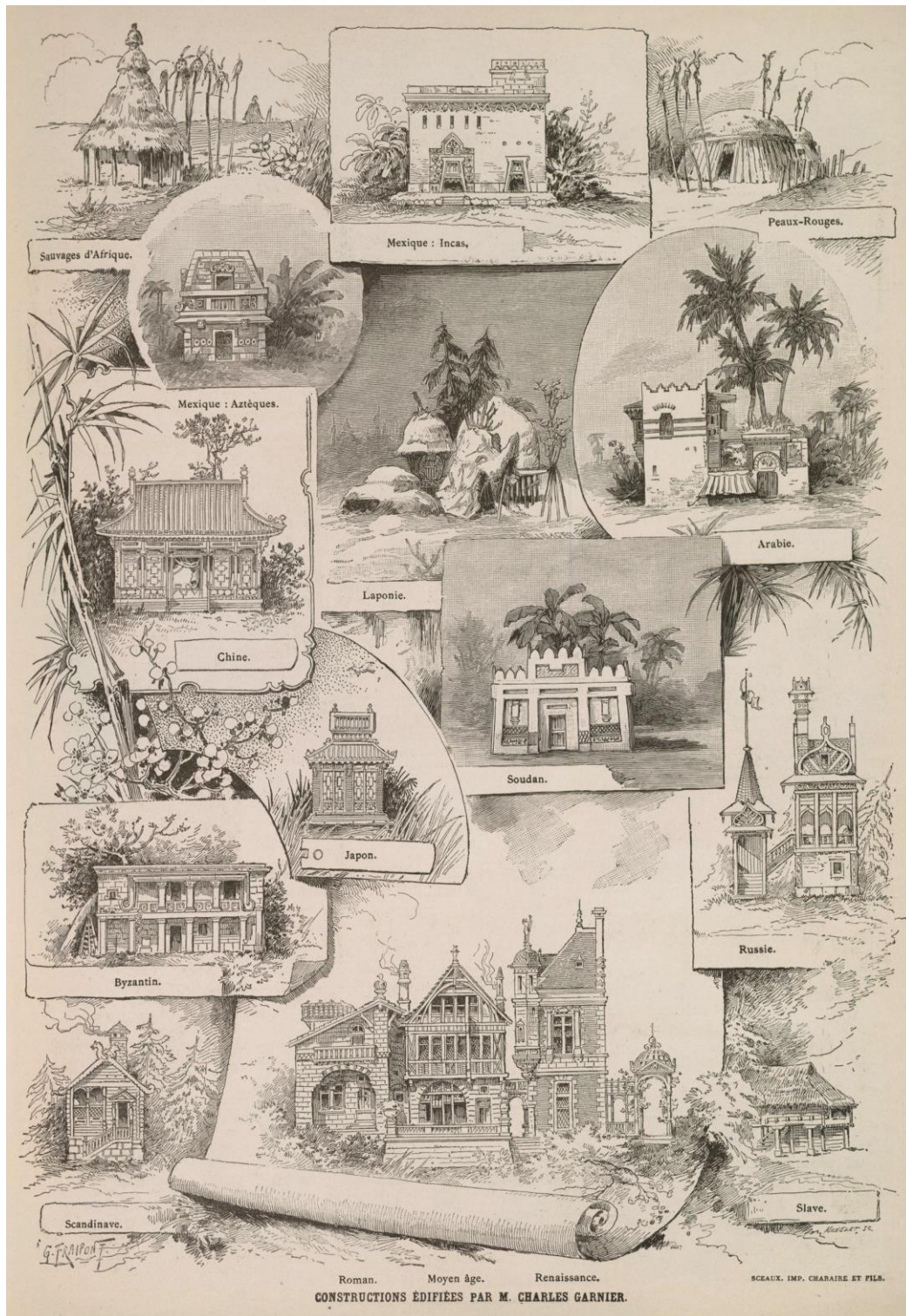
This interpretation of indigenous architecture as an indicator of civilization, progress and belief readily made its way into missionary dialogue and practice. Missionaries saw the divide between Christian and non-Christian on an architectural—as well as spiritual,

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<sup>98</sup> David, *British Imagination*, 138.

<sup>99</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 72.





1.8 : Charles Garnier, *Histoire de l'habitation humaine*, catalogue of structures  
 Note the images of northern indigenous cultures in the two stereotyped groupings of "Peaux-Rouges" and "Laponie".

moral, and educational—level and conversion represented a distinct shift in both personal belief and the built environment.<sup>100</sup> Conversion, therefore, did not just involve a change in belief, it also required the adoption of a new mode of living and spatial arrangement. Specifically, missionaries wanted native people to settle.

On one hand, missionaries saw the reorientation of indigenous architectural traditions away from transitory practice towards one that was stationed in one place as eminently practical. A nomadic lifestyle made it difficult for missionaries to access and teach indigenous people as well as for indigenous people to access worship space and educational opportunities. CMS missionary William Cockran was explicit about this issue when he wrote: “the Indian, while he continues to move in the forest, is unable to keep the Sabbath, worship God or teach his family.”<sup>101</sup> However, the desire to settle native people into permanent communities reflected the wider belief that their architecture was an explicit reflection of their non-Christian culture because of the connections made between material culture and religious belief.<sup>102</sup>

Indigenous groups in Canada were consistently judged based on their material culture, including architecture, which missionaries believed was an integral part of what CMS

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<sup>100</sup> Neylan, *Heavens*, 236.

<sup>101</sup> William Cockran Journal, 20 October 1820, CMSA-C/C1/M1.

<sup>102</sup> Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 163.



missionary William Duncan called “the miasma of heathen life.”<sup>103</sup> Architecture was also seen as a link between indigenous communities and the landscape, where people “of that harsh and wild nature” would, in the words of an unidentified Oblate missionary, “plant their tents or construct their wigwams in all the waterways, in the deep valleys of the Rocky Mountains or near the eternal glaciers of the Arctic Circle,”<sup>104</sup> giving the impression they were an extension of the natural world. In the far north, indigenous architecture therefore became the extension of the amoral wilderness. The lack of permanent structures made missionaries perceive the land as unoccupied with nothing to mark it as cultivated country, as native camps and their structures were seen as fleeting, perpetuating the idea of the North as a desolate waste.<sup>105</sup>

Transportable architecture also reinforced the biblical metaphor of the wandering people of Israel. Missionaries generally saw nomadic life as confused and unstructured, as opposed to a response to seasonal changes and migration patterns, like the aimless wandering of the Israelites in search of Canaan. Taché, for example, noted “the savage is not just nomadic, but also wandering”<sup>106</sup> suggesting this scriptural interpretation. This metaphor was extended to equate camp life and its associated structures with its

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<sup>103</sup> William Duncan to D. David, May 1875, CMSA-C2/O8/63A. See also, Scott, “Civilizing,” 72.

<sup>104</sup> *Notes*, LAC-MG17-17/M-2088. “...plantez leurs tentes ou construisez leur wigwams dans tous les cours d’eau, dans les vallées profondes des montagnes Rocheuses ou près des glaciers éternels du cercle polaire.”

<sup>105</sup> Katherine Manthorne, “Land, Icon, Nation,” in *Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic*, ed. Peter John Brownlee, Valéria Piccoli and Georgiana Uhlyarik (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 20; Whitson, “Wilderness and Paradise,” 8.

<sup>106</sup> Taché, *Esquisse*, 73. “Le sauvage est non seulement nomade, mais meme errant.”

scriptural equivalent.<sup>107</sup> For example, Father Auguste Charpeney wrote in 1859: “in light of the natives’ many tents put up around the beautiful chapel at Mingan, I was sharply moved and I was reminded of the tents of the lofty children of Jacob long ago in the desert around the ark of the Lord.”<sup>108</sup> For Charpeney and his contemporaries, the architectural connections reinforced their role in North America to bring Christianity to a scattered people while also bringing about a material transformation from the architecture of wandering to the architecture of a stable Christian community.

The dearth of value in indigenous structures was most clearly expressed when placed in contrast with those of settled communities. Methodist missionary Thomas Crosby wrote happily that, in his missions amongst the Tsimshian on the Pacific coast: “old heathen lodges have given way to neat comfortable homes.”<sup>109</sup> Tsimshian buildings were permanent, but not European, and Crosby’s assessment, therefore, is based solely on the value assigned to indigenous architecture as material aspects of non-Christian culture. For those working amongst nomadic people, permanent dwellings were viewed as “so much superior... to their former wretched tents”<sup>110</sup> because this reflected a Christian worldview where people lived in settled communities. Houses were the most common point of comparison because missionaries usually had difficulty identifying

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<sup>107</sup> Bompas, *Northern Lights*, 67.

<sup>108</sup> Charpeney to [unknown], 30 December 1859, *Missions* 2 (1863): 109. “à la vue de ces nombreuses tentes des sauvages dressées autour de la belle chapelle de Mingan, j’ai été vivement ému et je suis rappelé les tentes des enfants de Jacob élevées autrefois dans le désert autour de l’arche du Seigneur.”

<sup>109</sup> Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship* (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1914), 402.

<sup>110</sup> James Hunter, “The Cumberland Station,” *CMI* 1 (1850): 479.

indigenous structures that were comparable to buildings such as churches and schools.<sup>111</sup> Architecture was a direct and tangible medium through which civilization and culture was measured and the building traditions of Canada's native communities were found wanting. As a result, permanent buildings in the European style constructed for indigenous communities at mission stations were seen as a way to introduce civilization by reorienting the built environment away from the pre-Christian world.<sup>112</sup>

The desire to change indigenous communities through material culture was enacted through the medium of the mission station, a collection of buildings that typically included a mission house, a church and a school alongside auxiliary structures and the primary site of European, Christian architectural practice on the northern landscape. The mission station was also a tool for conversion of people and landscape on a practical and symbolic level, as will be explored in subsequent chapters. From a purely practical standpoint, the mission station provided a base from which missionaries could work.<sup>113</sup> Missionaries also hoped that their converts would settle at the station to form the core of a new Christian, indigenous community.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Neylan, *Heavens*, 345, nt9.

<sup>112</sup> Daly, "Being and Becoming," 24.

<sup>113</sup> Christophers, *Positioning*, 73.

<sup>114</sup> Provencher to Plessis, 13 September 1818, in Provencher, *Les Lettres de Monseigneur Joseph-Norbert Provencher, premier évêque de Saint-Boniface, Manitoba* (Saint-Boniface: Société historique de Saint-Boniface, 1913), 16.

However, the mission station was also a vital aspect of the civilizing mission through the reorientation of the land by providing a space through which to transform the land from indigenous to European space by the introduction of European spatial organization and cultivation. In this way, missionaries created a frontier space where indigenous and European people and their ideas about lifestyle and land use came into contact.

Symbolically and practically, the mission station denoted the continuous penetration of the wilderness and the ability of missionaries to enact change through the modification of the physical environment. Mission stations marked the moving edge of Christian influence. The transformation of the landscape from wilderness to cultivated land was demonstrated through the erection of European structures and the creation of Christian space that was both functionally and visually different from indigenous space.<sup>115</sup> In this way, architecture acted as an evangelical agent by forming a frontier contact space where missionaries could work to transform people and land to create a civilized, Christian ideal.

The missionary frontier as defined by the mission station was called, by Bompas, “the boundary land between light and darkness”<sup>116</sup> where contact had been initiated but missionaries still had work to do. Architecture very vividly demarcated this boundary by changing the landscape and presenting a new mode of human interaction with it through permanent built space. With little other European architecture in the region,

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<sup>115</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 43.

<sup>116</sup> Bompas, *Northern Lights*, 21.

mission stations were able to exert this influence through their presence and the way in which they modified the land through physical form and land usage.<sup>117</sup>

To separate themselves visually from other spaces, mission stations were consistently erected using European forms which were viewed as inherently Christian and representing an ordered and civilized world, in West's words, a "landmark of Christianity in a vast field of heathenism."<sup>118</sup> The most consistent contrast of the wilderness landscape and the civility of the mission station came from David Anderson, the first Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land, who explicitly recognized the use of infrastructure as the means by which that wilderness could be pushed back and tamed.<sup>119</sup>

Each mission station, particularly its church, marked for Anderson a pocket of Christianity in the vast, untamed wilds, "an oasis in the wilderness."<sup>120</sup> The mission marked what the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* called one of the "little spots in Rupert's Land, reclaimed from the moral wilderness,"<sup>121</sup> both spiritually and physically. The idea that a mission station was an island in the midst of darkness and danger was a theme repeated throughout nineteenth-century missionary dialogue, particularly in

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<sup>117</sup> Jose Refugio De la Torre Curiel, *Twilight of the Missionary Frontier: Shifting Interethnic Alliances and Social Organization in Sonora, 1768-1855* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), xxvi; Barker, "Missionary Frontier," 99.

<sup>118</sup> John West, *The Substance of a Journal during a Residence at the Red River Colony, British North America* (London: Seeley and Son, 1824), 91; Morgan, "Encounters," 55.

<sup>119</sup> Den Otter, "David Anderson," 93.

<sup>120</sup> Anderson, *Regions Beyond*, 7.

<sup>121</sup> "The Prospects of the Indian Race of North America," *CMI* 5 (1854): 63.

discussions about North America and Africa.<sup>122</sup> Throughout his career, Anderson explicitly correlated the built environment with both redemption and Paradise, especially when placed in contrast with the sinful North American landscape.<sup>123</sup>

Architecture, for Anderson as well as for others, marked the steady progress of Christianity on the land, through which the entirety of the continent could be redeemed and converted.<sup>124</sup>

The Anglican language of claiming the land through the use of infrastructure was the stronger of the two groups, yet the Oblates placed no less importance on the development of stations as points of contact which could change the wilderness into “an image of Paradise.”<sup>125</sup> The OMI had a long tradition of claiming the land through the erection of physical infrastructure designed and constructed in a consciously Christian style, beginning in their initial home missions in Provence.<sup>126</sup> Duchaussois elaborated on the importance of buildings within the wilderness context, stating that the Oblate missions formed “a religious cell...” which, “erected in the middle of the wild vastness, was first a cabin.”<sup>127</sup> The cabin marked a point of departure from non-Christian, indigenous buildings to those of a strong, established Christianity. Duchaussois, like

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<sup>122</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 172.

<sup>123</sup> David Anderson, *Britain's Response to the Nations* (London: T. Hatchard, 1857), 23.

<sup>124</sup> Taché to Dawson, 7 February 1859, *Missions* 2 (1863): 174

<sup>125</sup> *Notes*, LAC-MG17-17/M-2088. “...un image du paradis.”

<sup>126</sup> McCarthy, “Theory,” 83.

<sup>127</sup> Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Duchaussois, *Apôtres Inconnus* (Paris : Éditions Spes, 1924), 28. “une cellule religieuse...dressée au milieu de l’immensité sauvage, fut d’abord une cabane.”

Anderson, contrasted directly the Oblates' buildings with the landscape surrounding it to demonstrate the transformation caused by the introduction of Christianity.<sup>128</sup>

The role of the mission station as a marker of faith in the wilderness was multifaceted.

Not only proclaiming the presence of Christianity, and providing a contact space, it also reflected the presence of faith amongst the people and missionary success.<sup>129</sup>

Furthermore, successful, well-built missions were seen as attractive to potential converts.<sup>130</sup> West remarked that the architecture of mission: "cannot fail of having some effect on minds of all wandering people and the population of the [Red River] Settlement."<sup>131</sup> Similarly, Duchaussois asserted, the splendour of mission architecture would cause the unconverted to say: "I believe in this religion...I am converted."<sup>132</sup> So too would the erection of buildings, particularly churches, please God. In his first charge as bishop of the newly-created Diocese of Athabasca, William Bompas emphasized:

I do not know of any way in which we may better seek to call down a divine blessing on the land in which we live than by exerting ourselves for the erection of places of worship in the name of the Saviour whom we serve.<sup>133</sup>

For the CMS, architecture also marked the claiming of the land for Britain. While often at odds with colonial authority and not operating within an explicitly imperialist

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<sup>128</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 130.

<sup>129</sup> Émile Petitot, *Quinze ans sous le cercle polaire : Mackenzie, Anderson, Youkon* (Paris E. Dentu, 1889), 116.

<sup>130</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres Inconnu*, 124.

<sup>131</sup> West Journal, 6 June 1823, CMSA-C/C1/M1.

<sup>132</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 124. "Je crois en cette religion...Je me convertis."

<sup>133</sup> Bompas, "Extracts from the Bishop of Athabasca's First Charge," *CMI* 3 (1878): 45.

framework, there was a consistent undertone in the Anglican mission of the providential expansion of a British, Christian empire.<sup>134</sup> CMS missionaries saw themselves as an essential part of a larger enterprise of which Arctic expeditions were also integral players: the possession of territory for a Christian empire.<sup>135</sup> Anderson, for example, saw it as the responsibility of the CMS as an agent of Britain to ensure the “gospel was planted in the recesses of the loneliest wilderness.”<sup>136</sup> This duty was more profoundly nationalistic due to the fact that Arctic exploration was a particularly British domain and integrated into the national psyche as a facet of imperial success.

Cries for the evangelism of the North-West had traditionally fallen under the auspices of providing for the inhabitants of British-controlled territories and extending the blessings of the empire to the furthest corners of its reach.<sup>137</sup> While the Hudson’s Bay Company controlled the territory, its response to this duty was seen as severely lacking. As a result, missionaries were the vanguard of a seemingly more benign expansion; furthermore, it was believed indigenous groups had a right to the blessings of Christianity.<sup>138</sup> Like the trading post, the mission station could “mark the British boundary”<sup>139</sup> within the territory, reminding its inhabitants who controlled the land and

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<sup>134</sup> Porter, *Religion*, 61.

<sup>135</sup> Stanley, *Bible and the Flag*, 68.

<sup>136</sup> Anderson, *Britain’s Response*, 19.

<sup>137</sup> Aborigines Protection Society, *Canada West and the Hudson’s Bay Company* (London: William Tweedie, 1856), i; “The True Strength of Missions – A Lesson from History,” *CMI* 1 (1850): 52.

<sup>138</sup> “The Aboriginal Tribes of Rupert’s Land,” *CMI* 3 (1852): 238. For application of this idea elsewhere, see, for example: Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:78; Hall, “Greenland’s Icy Mountains,” 225.

<sup>139</sup> Anderson quoted in Stock, *History*, 2:322.



where British influence lay. Unlike the trading post, however, it was intended to offer a vision of a benevolent and charitable Christian empire.

In contrast, the OMI was not interested in British imperial expansion. As an ultramontane organization, their allegiance lay not with France, but with Rome and the expansion of a centralized Catholic church with allegiance to the papacy.<sup>140</sup> The Oblates explicitly operated with the “authorization of the Sovereign Pontiff,”<sup>141</sup> and had no objection to working in foreign territory. They considered it their duty to expand the Church regardless of national and imperial boundaries.<sup>142</sup>

Nevertheless, the idea that France, as a nation, had a role to play in evangelism was an undercurrent that ran through the missions, even in priests from Québec, because of their view of Catholic Europe as a model for the Christian world. Provencher, for example, wrote in 1841 that “It must be acknowledged that France plays both a good and a large role in the Christian world...in forwarding the glory of God.”<sup>143</sup> Stylistically and decoratively, the buildings erected by the OMI sometimes showed a distinct nod to French culture, most notably the use of fleur-de-lis throughout the church at Fort Good Hope designed by Petitot (fig. 1.9). But their stations were not intended to mark out an

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<sup>140</sup> McCarthy, “Theory,” 58.

<sup>141</sup> Mazenod, “Règlements et Statuts de la Congrégation de la Jeunesse Chrétienne,” *Missions* 37 (1899): 25. “...par l’autorisation du Souverain Pontife.”

<sup>142</sup> Martha McCarthy, *To Evangelize the Nations: Roman Catholic Missions in Manitoba, 1818-1870* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation Historical Resources, 1991), 8.

<sup>143</sup> Provencher to Ignace Bourget, 13 July 1841, AASB-P3776. “Il faut reconnaître que la France joue à la fois un bon et un grand rôle dans le monde chrétien...en transmettant la gloire de Dieu.”



1.9: Fleur de lys details, Church of Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Good Hope. Author's photograph

empire for France as they were not operating in French territory, working rather within a framework of Christian expansion alone.

### *Conclusion*

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the wilderness of the Canadian North had taken on its own identity in the European imagination. It was the ultimate sublime setting: dangerous, otherworldly and remote where the heroic explorer came face to face with the vast power of nature. But with exploration came the desire to tame the land and demarcate it as a zone of European influence. For missionaries, this intrinsically meant marking it for Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic, and extending the blessing of the gospel “to the regions beyond.”

Infrastructure, through the mission station, became the medium through which the north could be civilized and tamed. As beacons of civilization and Christianity, the structures erected by missionaries throughout the region followed in the tradition of Arctic explorers who both romanticised the sublimity of the environment and tried to change it through the modification of landscape. For missionaries, the taming of the land through such means became the natural extension of evangelizing indigenous people, for one could not be completed without the other.<sup>144</sup> The mission station was

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<sup>144</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 117.

the contact zone, the frontier that differentiated indigenous and non-indigenous space and the place where transformation could take place.

Missionary activity began at Red River in the 1820s and had spread into what was considered to be the Arctic regions by the 1850s. Throughout this period, missionary approach to the north shifted and modified as they actually encountered the landscape and its people, an experience that forced some of their ideas to change to suit the realities of the mission field. Yet the romanticism of the field never disappeared, as Lewis' 1904 text aptly demonstrates. The heroism and hardships of the northern mission field defined its growth and development throughout the nineteenth century, forcing missionaries to confront what they perceived as an uncivilized and ungodly wilderness and advance the frontier of Christianity from the furthest edge of the known world and unto the unknown by building mission stations and transforming the land. This began, not in the far north, but in the present-day Canadian Prairies around Winnipeg where the first Catholic and Anglican missionaries entered into the territory and began to test the strategies, including those related to architecture and infrastructure development, they would use for the conversion and civilization of indigenous people, strategies that they would later employ in the far northern regions of the continent.



## 2: Missionary Expansion in Western Canada

In 1857, Bishop Anderson presented a speech at the annual meeting of the CMS in London, outlining the progress of the North American mission. This was the year before the CMS successfully entered the Mackenzie District and Anderson was certain that expansion was imminent. He said:

Ours is a country which has been opened so far that although we are not able to penetrate into the thousands and thousands of miles that are open to our view, yet a certain distance has been traversed...stretching westward as far as we are permitted to go; and I trust we shall penetrate the Rocky Mountains and gain the Sea beyond.<sup>1</sup>

Anderson had a clear vision of a mission field stretching across the North American continent, including into the far north. But he was also aware that the expansion of the CMS' mission rested on their initial work at the Red River Settlement, Red River Settlement, near present-day Winnipeg in the Canadian Prairies. These early, southern

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, in Stock, *History*, 2:322.

missions were vastly different from their northern successors but, nevertheless, the groundwork for future growth in the development and practice of strategies based on Christianity, civilization and settlement. This was also how the Oblates' missions developed, beginning at Red River and moving north.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, both the CMS and OMI developed a mission station strategy in southern Rupert's Land based on wider evangelical practices of conversion and civilization. Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries approached the land and its people with the idea of wilderness and its suppression firmly in mind, intent on changing Rupert's Land into the cultivated garden of Christianity. These initial decades of activity allowed missionaries to develop strategies for the application of Christianity and civilization as an approach to indigenous people and their land, as well as developing the relationships with indigenous people and the HBC which were to be vital for northward expansion.

### *Missionaries and the HBC in the 1820s*

Missionaries entered western Canada with the permission of the HBC and, throughout the rest of the century, the relationship between the two non-indigenous groups shaped how missionary activity developed. To begin with, neither Catholic nor Protestant

missionaries entered the territory to minister to indigenous people. Rather, they were invited into Rupert's Land by the Company to serve the spiritual and educational needs of HBC employees, their families and members of the Selkirk Settlement at Red River (fig. 2.1).<sup>2</sup> Thinking about a growing settlement in the region, the Governors of the Company believed it would: "be both prudent and economical to incur some expense in placing these people where they may maintain themselves and be civilized and instructed in religion."<sup>3</sup>

Two secular priests, Joseph-Norbert Provencher and Sévère Dumoulin, were sent by Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis of Québec in 1818 in response to a request from Catholics at Red River for a priest, with HBC assent.<sup>4</sup> The CMS' first missionary, John West, arrived in 1820. Unlike the Catholic missionaries, West had a formal arrangement with the HBC to act as the Company's chaplain.<sup>5</sup> Because of this agreement, the HBC's relationship with the missionaries is probably best illustrated through their interactions with West.

As articulated by the Company, West was: "to be resident at the Settlement on Red River for the purposes of affording religious instruction to the Company's retired

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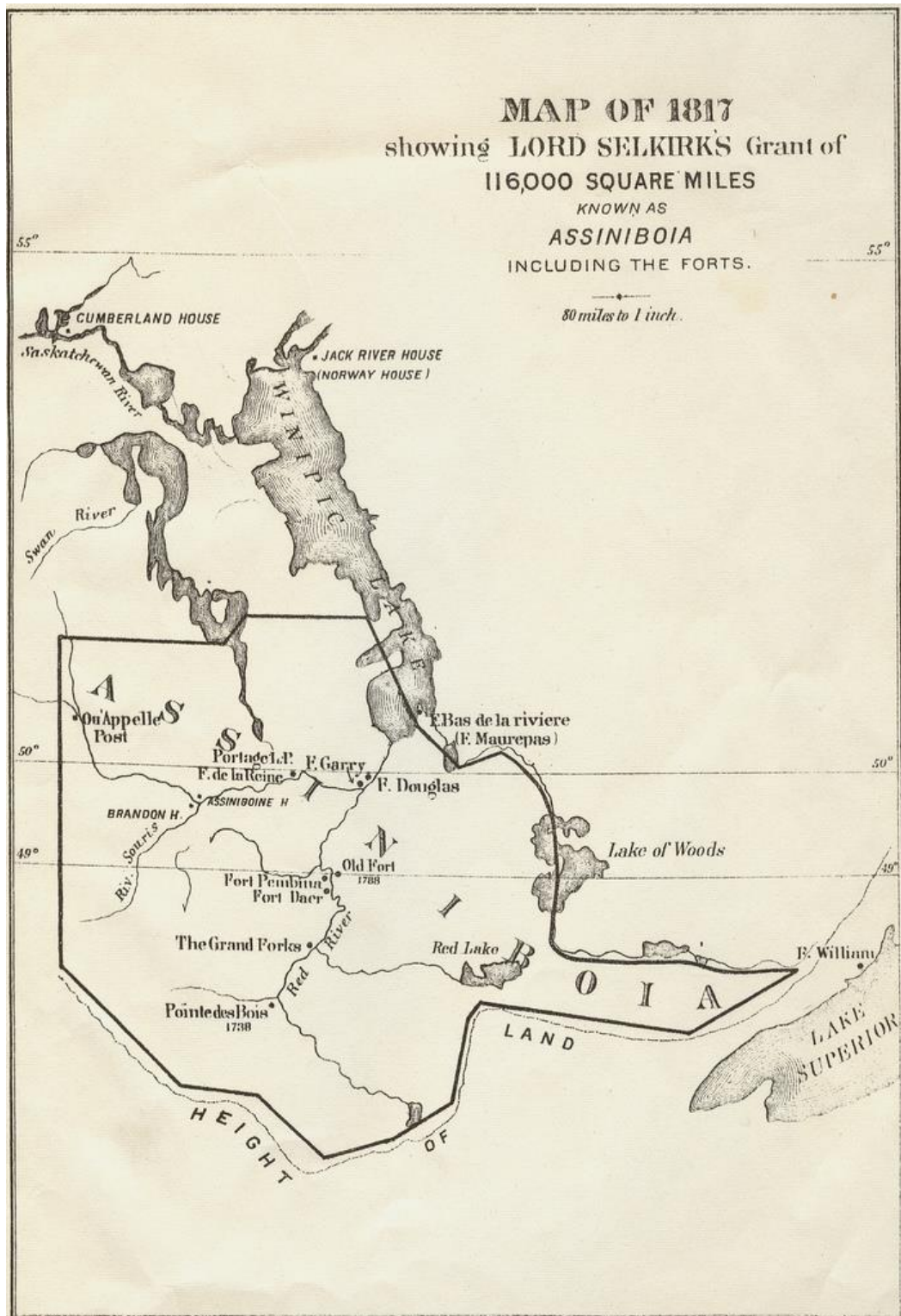
<sup>2</sup> Galbraith, *Hudson's Bay*, 48.

<sup>3</sup> HBC Committee to Simpson, 27 February 1822, *Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, 1821-31*, edited by E.E. Rich and R. Harvey Fleming (Toronto: The Hudson's Bay Company Record Society, 1940), 33.

<sup>4</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 11-13; Grant, *Wintertime*, 98-99.

<sup>5</sup> Thompson, "John West," 44.





2.1: Assiniboia and the Red River Settlement. "Map Illustrating Lord Selkirk's 116,000 Square Miles Land Grant, Area which was known as Assiniboia," published 1881.

servants and other inhabitants of the Settlement.”<sup>6</sup> However, both Catholics and Protestants desired to work primarily amongst indigenous communities, something that concerned the Company because of the belief that it would negatively impact the fur trade.<sup>7</sup> In fact, West did reach out to indigenous communities, which led to his dismissal.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Plessis had stated in his instruction to Provencher and Dumoulin that: “the first object of their mission [is] to reclaim from barbarism and the disorders that result from it the Indians scattered over the vast country.”<sup>9</sup> This was in no way what the HBC wanted. Their suspicions were best articulated by Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the HBC in Rupert’s Land between 1820 and 1860, who believed strongly that missions negatively impacted business. He wrote of West:

Mr. West...takes a very sanguine view of this scheme which is to diffuse Xtian [*sic*] knowledge among the natives...but in my humble opinion, [it] will be attended with little other good...than rearing the Indians in habits of indolence; they are already too much enlightened by the late opposition and more of it would in my opinion do harm instead of good to the Fur Trade.<sup>10</sup>

Simpson was not against missions insofar as they were strictly regulated and did not “interfere with our operations.”<sup>11</sup> He even expressed support for a mission on the Pacific

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<sup>6</sup> Minutes, HBC London Committee, 13 October 1819, HBCA-A.1/52.

<sup>7</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 174.

<sup>8</sup> Thompson, “John West,” 44.

<sup>9</sup> Plessis, “Instructions for Messrs. J.N. Provencher and J.N.S. Dumoulin,” in *Northwest Missions*, 58. “...le premier objet de leur mission de retirer de la barbarie et des désordres qui en sont la suite, les nations sauvages répandues dans cette vaste contrée.”

<sup>10</sup> Simpson to Andrew Colvile, 20 May 1822, in Frederick Merk (ed.) *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson’s Journal, 1824-25* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), 181.

<sup>11</sup> Simpson to Colvile, 20 May 1822, in *Fur Trade*, 181.

coast, but he was concerned over the potentially negative impact of civilization on the role of indigenous people as traders within the HBC's business model.<sup>12</sup>

However, the HBC Governors viewed West's appointment somewhat differently. On one hand, there were several prominent evangelicals on the HBC's board, including Benjamin Harrison who played an important role in West's appointment.<sup>13</sup> Harrison genuinely believed in missions to indigenous people, noting in an 1822 memo to the CMS of a desire "to afford religious instruction and to better the inhabitants and native tribes of Hudson's Bay" through "the extension of Religious Instruction, Civilization and Education."<sup>14</sup>

However, there was another motive, as explained by board member Andrew Colvile in an 1824 memo to Simpson:

it is incumbent on the Company if there was no settlement to have a chaplain in their country and at least to allow missions to be established at proper places for the conversion of the Indians, indeed it wd [*sic*] be extremely impolitic in the present temper and disposition of the public in this Country to show any unwillingness to assist in such an object.<sup>15</sup>

"The present temper" to which Colvile alluded was the humanitarian and pro-mission sentiment ripe within British society at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The

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<sup>12</sup> Simpson to Benjamin Harrison, 10 March 1825, CMSA-C/C1/M1; Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 165.

<sup>13</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 170-71.

<sup>14</sup> Harrison to CMS Committee, [1821], CMSA-C/C1/M1.

<sup>15</sup> Colvile to Simpson, 11 March 1824, in *Fur Trade*, 205.

belief that the British Empire had a duty to extend the benefits of Christianity to its non-Christian inhabitants put significant pressure to support missions on imperial agents and chartered companies, including the HBC, who risked negative public opinion if they did not.<sup>16</sup> The HBC had seen the effect of this sentiment on the East India Company (EIC) where backlash against attempts by the Company to limit missionary activity in India had resulted in the addition of a so-called “pious clause” in their 1813 charter renewal, forcing the free admission of missionaries into their territories.<sup>17</sup>

The clause changed little with regard to the EIC’s operations as missionaries continued to be tightly regulated.<sup>18</sup> Its major impact, however, was the precedent set for other companies to allow evangelism in their territories. The HBC’s charter was modified in 1821 to emphasize their responsibility for “promoting their [indigenous peoples’] moral and religion improvement.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, the Committee impressed upon Simpson the need to demonstrate a surface commitment to missions, noting that, should they fail to comply, “great and well-merited odium will be excited in this country against the Company, which will probably produce very injurious effects both in respect to rights and the pecuniary interest of the Company.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Porter, *Religion*, 40-43.

<sup>17</sup> Cox, *Missionary Enterprise*, 46-48; Penelope Carson, “An Imperial Dilemma: The Propagation of Christianity in Early Colonial India,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 18 (1990): 173-75.

<sup>18</sup> Stanley, “Commerce and Christianity,” 84-85; Cox, *Imperial Faultlines*, 1032.

<sup>19</sup> “An Act for Regulating the Fur Trade and Establishing a Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction within Certain Parts of North America,” in *Charters, Statutes and Orders in Count &c. Relating to the Hudson’s Bay Company*, 62.

<sup>20</sup> HBC Committee to Simpson, 12 March 1824, HBCA-A.6/20.



2.2: View of the Roman Catholic Church, Red River Colony, 1823. *Library and Archives Canada, C-001726*

With lukewarm support from the HBC, both Anglicans and Catholics developed missions around Red River, focused primarily on the Settlement's European and Métis populations. The Catholic mission was centred at Saint-Boniface where a land grant had been made to them as part of the Selkirk Settlement.<sup>21</sup> An outstation was established at Pembina in 1818, then moved in White Horse Plain after the drawing of the American border.<sup>22</sup> By 1823, a large church had been erected at Saint-Boniface alongside a priests' residence and school to serve a growing and successful mission (fig. 2.2).<sup>23</sup> Similarly, West established the Anglican mission just north of Fort Douglas, erecting a log church in 1822 (fig. 2.3).<sup>24</sup> He was replaced by David Jones the following year who expanded the

<sup>21</sup> Provencher to Selkirk, 14 August 1818, in *Northwest Missions*, 139.

<sup>22</sup> Dumoulin to Lady Selkirk, 7 August 1818, in *Northwest Missions*, 143.

<sup>23</sup> Provencher to Plessis, 17 July 1819, in *Lettres*, 38-39.

<sup>24</sup> West Journal, 2 June 1823, CMSA-C/C1/M1.



**2.3:** Protestant Church and Mission School, Red River Colony. *Library and Archives Canada, R9266*

mission north to Image Plain in 1825 and Grand Rapids in 1830. But none ministered to indigenous people.

However, by the middle of the 1830s, each denomination had established a mission explicitly for local indigenous communities. The Anglican station, named the Indian Settlement, was founded near Fort Garry in 1832 by Cockran with reluctant approval from the HBC.<sup>25</sup> The Catholic station, St-Paul-des-Saulteaux, was founded two years later by George-Antoine Belcourt who was sent from Québec explicitly to convert the

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids: Nineteenth Century Church and Society at St. Andrew's Parish, Red River* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 46.

Saulteaux.<sup>26</sup> These two missions began to shift missionary focus towards indigenous populations, allowing for the testing of evangelical strategies and setting the stage for northern expansion.

Despite their denominational differences, both Cockran and Belcourt were explicitly committed to the Christianity and civilization model. Drawing on the idea that a hunting-based economy was both undisciplined and not industrious, and therefore incompatible with Christian values, these two missions responded directly to the desire to convert and redeem indigenous people through the modification of their economic structure and spiritual state and, by extension, their environment.<sup>27</sup> As one OMI circular noted, “there was no civilizing industry in the vast wilderness”<sup>28</sup> before the arrival of missionaries; indigenous hunting culture was even viewed as eroding any moral virtue and industriousness already present in indigenous society.<sup>29</sup> It was through their settlements that Cockran and Belcourt believed they could transform indigenous people through faith and self-improvement by rejecting the wilderness and the perceived sinfulness of its economic and spiritual state. The Selkirk Settlement, where agriculture had successfully developed since its establishment, was often seen as a beacon of pastoral

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<sup>26</sup> McCarthy, *To Evangelize*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 1:63-66; Francis, “Civilizing,” 57; Axtell, *European*, 44. Hunting was also viewed as fundamentally a form of recreation, in line with its place in European culture. See John M. Mackenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1988)10-11.

<sup>28</sup> *Notes*, LAC-MG17-17/M2088. “il n’y avait pas d’industrie civilisatrice dans le vaste désert.”

<sup>29</sup> “Cumberland Station,” *CMI* 1 (1850): 476.

civilization in the wilderness, something upon which Christianity could improve and develop this establishment settlement model.<sup>30</sup>

The Christianity and civilization model was the standard practice for both groups, specifically the settlement of indigenous people in Christian communities. It was also very explicitly linked to the introduction of European agricultural methods; it should be noted, however, that the kind of agricultural settlements missionaries were promoting were not based on contemporary European society, but rather on the quasi-medievalist pastoral ideal centred on the faithful Christian agricultural labourer manifest in nineteenth-century society because of the clear social and moral ills missionaries saw in industrialized Europe.<sup>31</sup> In this approach, communities developed based on a pervasive Christian model, applied to all areas of life, including faith, work and the domestic sphere, fundamentally aimed at changing nearly all aspects of indigenous life and culture.

This approach was also expressed in missionary policy. Although the Oblates did not arrive until well after the establishment of St.-Paul-des-Saulteaux, the Catholic attitude towards civilization was most clearly expressed by Mazenod in his 1853 instructions to

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<sup>30</sup> O'Wram, *Promise of Eden*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, "Christianity and Colonialism," 12.



missionaries abroad.<sup>32</sup> Although prioritizing conversion, he also saw a clear civilizing mandate in “the Christian and social formation”<sup>33</sup> of indigenous people. He wrote:

Far from considering the formation of the savages in the social life as foreign to their programme, the members of the Society there will see on the contrary an excellent way of contributing to the good of the mission and making more fruitful their Apostolate. This is why they will not neglect anything in bringing the savage tribes to renounce their wandering life and in the choosing of locations where they will learn to build houses, to cultivate the earth and to familiarize themselves with the first arts of civilization.<sup>34</sup>

De Mazenod was clear in his understanding that civilization through settlement and cultivation was an essential aspect of evangelism, although he also recognized that civilization was not absolutely imperative to conversion.<sup>35</sup> He believed strongly that “the prosperity of civilized society”<sup>36</sup> and their spiritual welfare, could benefit significantly through the creation of Christian communities. Yet he also believed that civilization could not exist without Catholic belief, articulating the more widely-held Catholic belief that civilization developed from Christianity.<sup>37</sup> Plessis also belonged to this school of thought, frequently discussing the connection between Christianity and civilization in his

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<sup>32</sup> Raymond Huel “Early Oblate Missions to the Canadian Northwest : Evolution of a Mission Strategy,” *Vie Oblates Life* 48, no. 2 (1989) : 238; Gaston Carrière, “The Response of the Oblate in Western Canada to Bishop de Mazenod’s Perception of ‘Mission’,” *Vie Oblate Life* 42 (1983) : 67.

<sup>33</sup> Eugène de Mazenod, *Instructions de Notre Vénéré Fondateur Relative aux Missions Étrangères* (Rome : Maison Générale, 1893), 13. “...cette formation chrétienne et sociale...”

<sup>34</sup> Mazenod, *Instructions*, 13. “En loin de considérer la travail de formation des sauvages aux nécessites de la vie sociale comme étranger à leur programme, les membres de la Société y verront, au contraire, un excellent moyen de contribuer au bien de la Mission et rendre plus fructueux leur apostolat. C’est pourquoi ils ne négligeront rien pour amener les tribus nomades à renoncer à leurs habitudes de vie errante et à se choisir des emplacements où ils apprendront à bâtir des maisons, à cultiver la terre et à se familiariser avec les premiers arts de la civilisation.”

<sup>35</sup> Mazenod, *Instructions*, 14; Champagne, “Grandin,” 342.

<sup>36</sup> Mazenod, *Instructions*, 13. “...la prosperité des sociétés civilisés...”

<sup>37</sup> Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 42.

correspondence, writing in 1816 that the Catholic mission's goal was: "the civilization of the poor people of every nation scattered over the immense region between Lake Superior and Hudson's Bay."<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, he, like Mazenod, believed that civilization was not a necessity for faith, but rather a benefit of Christian belief which strengthened society and raised indigenous peoples' temporal condition.<sup>39</sup>

The CMS held similar views, although, in the early nineteenth century, there was significant contention as to the precedence of the two complementary goals of this strategy. Individuals such as Samuel Marsden, who founded the CMS mission to New Zealand, was firm in his conviction that civilization must precede conversion, a view that was prevalent throughout the 1820s and 1830s; Cockran seems to be of this school of thought. Yet, by the middle of the century, this view had shifted to emphasize the supremacy of Christianity over civilization, while recognizing the importance of the latter in raising indigenous people to better standards of living and religion.<sup>40</sup> Venn promoted this approach, writing in 1856 that:

The principle that men must be civilized in order to embrace Christianity is untenable; for civilization, though favourable to the development of Christianity, so far from being essential for its initiation is, on the contrary, the consequence, not the forerunner of the Gospel.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Plessis to Selkirk, 8 April 1816, in *Northwest Missions*, 7. "Je désire de tout mon cœur entreprendre la culture des pauvres peuplades de toute nation, répandues dans l'immense pays qui se trouve entre le Lac Supérieur et la Baie d'Hudson." See also: Plessis to Provencher, 13 September 1818, in *Lettres*, 16.

<sup>39</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 13-14; Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 42.

<sup>40</sup> Stanley, "Christianity and Civilization," 177.

<sup>41</sup> Venn, quoted in Wilbert R. Shenk, "Henry Venn's Instructions to Missionaries," *Missiology: An International Review* 5, no. 4 (1977): 473.

Venn is probably most well-known for his “native church policy”, advocating for the growth of independent, indigenous churches, with an indigenous episcopal hierarchy and divorced from missionary control; this strategy even advocated for the integration of some aspects of indigenous culture, most notably language, into missionary practice.<sup>42</sup> However, Venn still vigorously advocated for settlement as important to the growth of Christian communities in the shift from mission field to Christian church he hoped his policy would enact.<sup>43</sup> Not only did settled communities replicate the moral and social norms present in Christian societies, they also allowed for the development of a parish-based model fundamental to Venn’s policy.

Civilization, however, was also bound up in social and economic improvement and this was a cornerstone of the CMS’ understanding of how Christianity and civilization were related. Specifically, the CMS, and other evangelical Protestants, saw the role of Christian civilization as increasing the temporal prosperity of indigenous converts by encouraging sustainable and moral modes of economic production, and the prosperity developed through the labours of indigenous converts was viewed as providentially ordained as

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<sup>42</sup> Williams, “Not Transplanting,” 148.

<sup>43</sup> Wilbert R. Shenk, “Henry Venn’s Legacy,” *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 1, no. (1977): 17; T.E. Yates, *Venn and Victorian Bishops Abroad: The Missionary Policies of Henry Venn and their Repercussions upon the Anglican Episcopate of the Colonial Period, 1841-1972* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1978), 197.

reward for faith and labour.<sup>44</sup> Although discussed most frequently in relation to Africa where civilization and commerce in Christian communities was seen as an antidote to slavery, these ideas were also applied to North America where the fur trade was portrayed as an exploitative system, particularly by such organizations as the Aborigines Protection Society, and Christian civilization provided a means for indigenous communities to develop independent economic structures based on Christian principles.<sup>45</sup>

Conversion to Christianity was, however, the primary goal of both missions, and viewed as an outcome “far more important than civilization.”<sup>46</sup> However, both Cockran and Belcourt took rapid steps to establish mission stations which aimed to civilize indigenous people through the creation of agricultural settlements. Firm in the belief that settlement could enact social, moral and spiritual change, they encouraged new and potential converts to abandon hunting and embrace agriculture as a more prosperous and Christian alternative.<sup>47</sup> Not only would living in communities allow for easier access to educational and catechetical opportunities, but it would also allow converts to improve themselves through the adoption of European work ethic and activities. This, in theory, would lead a more comfortable and stable life, giving greater opportunity for

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<sup>44</sup> Stanley, “Commerce and Christianity,” 71-75; Porter, “Commerce and Christianity,” 616; Ajayi, “Venn and Development,” 332; Adrian Hastings, “The Victorian Missionary,” in *The Church in Africa, 1450-1950*, edited by Adrian Hastings (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 282-87.

<sup>45</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 203; *Select Committee* (1857): 442-44.

<sup>46</sup> Church Missionary Society, *An Historical Notice of the Formation of the Church Missionary Society's North-West America Mission and Its Progress to August 1848* (London: Seeley, 1849), 30.

<sup>47</sup> Scott, “Cultivating Christians,” 23-24; Archer, “Northwest,” 22; Cox, *Missionary Enterprise*, 135.

spiritual contemplation thereby encouraging Christian belief.<sup>48</sup> Provencher commented:

“I believe that a little bit of comfort in life contributed greatly to their moral good as their habits and Christian education suffered greatly in all the travelling they were forced to do for their subsistence.”<sup>49</sup> Both Cockran and Belcourt saw their missions as model settlements forming templates for future expansion and demonstrating the benefits of a settled, Christian life.

In regions populated by indigenous groups designated by Mackray as “uncivilized heathen”, the creation of model settlements was seen as a vital method of inculcating civilization because of the station’s use of permanent European-style buildings. As a fundamental shift from indigenous architectural methods, buildings vividly illustrated to converts the contrast between non-Christian camps and settled Christian communities; furthermore, building, farming and settlement civilized the landscape thereby instilling pastoral order on the land. Through a radical change in lifestyle and space, missionaries believed they could transform indigenous society into model Christian communities.

One of the earliest regions where this model was applied was at New Zealand’s Bay of Islands. Established by the CMS in 1814, this mission was explicitly used the convert and civilize approach, integrating Christian evangelism with settlement and the introduction

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<sup>48</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 33.

<sup>49</sup> Provencher to B.C. Panet, 18 June 1828, *Lettres*, 123. “Je crois qu’un peu plus d’aisance pour la vie contribuerait à leur bien moral, car les mœurs et l’éducation chrétienne souffrent beaucoup dans tous les voyages qu’ils ont été forcés de faire pour subsister.”



**2.4:** Cyprian Bridge, Waimate Mission Station in 1845, engraved in 1859. *Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, PUBL 0144 1 330*

of European farming methods and carpentry, which founder Samuel Marsden called “the arts”<sup>50</sup> of civilization.<sup>51</sup>

The station established at Te Waimate in 1830 was specifically intended to be a model farming community (fig. 2.4).<sup>52</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, it was lauded as the epitome of missionary mixed agricultural settlement and a model of the application of civilization.<sup>53</sup> Agriculture was introduced alongside Christianity in a settlement intended

<sup>50</sup> Samuel Marsden, “New Zealand,” *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society* 2 (1806-1809): 961-63.

<sup>51</sup> Davidson, “Ecclesiology,” 198.

<sup>52</sup> “New Zealand: Church Missionary Society,” *Missionary Register* (1820): 113.

<sup>53</sup> Hargraves, “Waimate,” 40.

to resemble an English village to promote a pastoral ideal, an intention recognized by visitors throughout the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>54</sup> Here, indigenous people were not only Christianized but also civilized through the introduction of an agrarian ideal centred on a settlement model founded in European precedent. Until the middle of the nineteenth century when increasing numbers of settlers overwhelmed the Christian Maori population, the Anglican Church in New Zealand maintained a relatively substantial and fairly independent Maori church, although their adoption of European ideas about farming and living was by no means universal.<sup>55</sup>

This was also how St.-Paul-des-Saulteaux and the Indian Settlement operated. Belcourt and Cockran believed that true conversion could only occur with a radical change of lifestyle. For example, Cockran wrote:

The Indian while he continues to move in the forest, is unable to keep the Sabbath, worship God or teach his family, consequently he must lay aside his erratic habits, come and cultivate the grounds according to the Divine appointment, and then when he has thus far returned to meet God, God will meet him with the doctrines of salvation, and teach him things whereby he and his house may be saved.<sup>56</sup>

Cockran was eager to introduce agriculture, stating: "The Indian has to learn to cultivate the ground, to rear cattle, to build an establishment and to serve God with a sincere

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<sup>54</sup> Marsden to Shunghee (Hongi), 11 November 1823, in John Rawson Elder, *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden, 1765-1838* (Dunedin: Coulls Somerville and Wilkie, 1932), 336; Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle* (New York: F.F. Collier and Sons, 1909), 448-49.

<sup>55</sup> Davidson, "Culture and Ecclesiology," 114.

<sup>56</sup> Cockran Journal, 30 October 1832, CMSA-C/C1/M.1.

heart and ready mind.”<sup>57</sup> Through settlement and agriculture, Cockran aimed to civilize indigenous people through changes in their economy, culture and beliefs, setting a powerful precedent for future expansion.

Belcourt also believed that sedentary agriculture was clearly superior to traditional indigenous life and advocated for a basic cultural shift as a part of the conversion process. His primary aim at St.-Paul was the introduction of an agricultural economy, encouraging the Saulteaux to settle and plant crops.<sup>58</sup> Taking up the plough was, for Belcourt, “the first step in their conversion”<sup>59</sup> and, to promote this, he farmed the land himself. He also argued that, from a practical perspective, catechism was easier with a settled community and could be completed using fewer personnel.

The agricultural mission formed the backbone of both early Catholic and Anglican missions, a strategic focus that had direct and important effects on their approach to infrastructure. The introduction of agriculture directly affected the construction of buildings from the straightforward perspective that a settled community needed infrastructure in order to live, worship and maintain their economy. But, for both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, the construction of buildings was also intimately

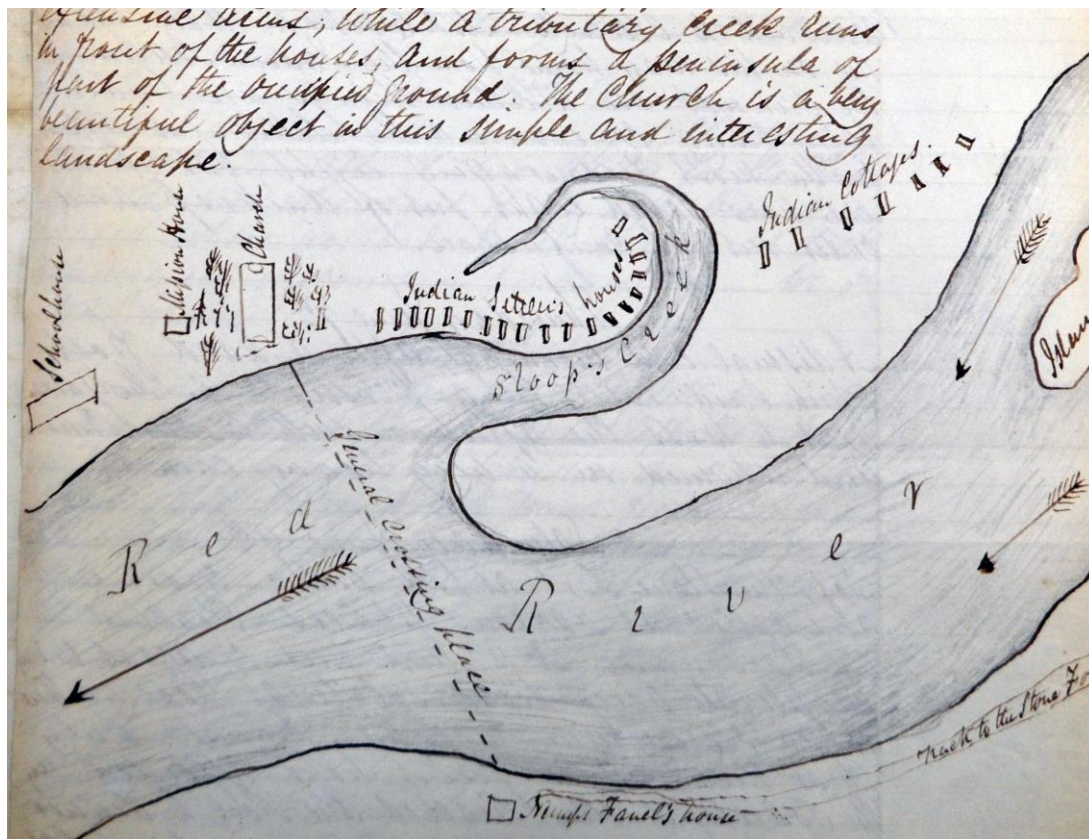
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<sup>57</sup> Cockran to CMS Secretaries, 31 August 1838, CMSA-C/C1/M2.

<sup>58</sup> Nicole St.-Onge, “Uncertain Margins: Métis and Saulteaux Identities in St.-Paul des Saulteaux, Red River, 1821-1870,” *Manitoba History* 53 (2006): 5; Martha McCarthy, *To Evangelize*, 75.

<sup>59</sup> Belcourt to Signay, 25 June 1835, AASB. “...le premier pas de leur conversion.” See also: David Jones and Cockran, Report on the State of Morality and Education at the Red River Settlement and Grand Rapids, 1835, CMSA-C/C1/M2.





2.5: Layout of the Indian Settlement. David Jones Journal, Church Missionary Society Archives, C/C1/O37/68

entwined with the civilizing process, marking the transition from nomadic and pre-Christian existence to a settled and stable Christian life.

### *Infrastructure and the Settled Mission*

In early nineteenth-century missions, architecture was consistently viewed as one of the key “advantages” of civilization which assisted in the development of Christian

communities.<sup>60</sup> In order to use architecture in mission, a number of basic structures needed to be erected, including the church, school and domestic spaces. Construction began almost immediately to assist in the transition “from a state of barbarism into a state of civilization.”<sup>61</sup>

Construction at Cockran’s mission commenced in 1832. Its layout is illustrated in an 1838 drawing (fig. 2.5) showing the locations of domestic and ecclesiastical structures. The schoolhouse, mission house and church are grouped separately from the “Indian Settler’s Houses” and “Indian Cottages” along the bank of the river. Of note in the layout is the organic process of development; there is no explicit division of the property into lots, but the houses have been erected in lines along the river bank, consistent with farm planning throughout Assiniboia.<sup>62</sup> What Jones’ drawing does not emphasize is the centrality of the farm in Cockran’s scheme, nor does it demonstrate the designation of individual farming lots. However, the settlement was certainly designed in this way. For the CMS, it was imperative that the settlement be laid out in individual farms, each owned by a single-family unit, in a move away from the communalism of the hunt and

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<sup>60</sup> Francis, “Civilizing,” 78; den Otter, *Wilderness*, 33.

<sup>61</sup> Cockran to CMS Secretaries, 25 July 1856, CMSA-C/C1/O16/12.

<sup>62</sup> Barry Kaye, “The Historical Development of the Cultural Landscape of Manitoba,” in *The Geography of Manitoba: Its Land and Its People*, ed. John Welsted, John Everitt and Christoph Stadel (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 87; Ron Williams, “French Patterns in Western Canadian Landscapes,” *JSSAC* 31, no. 1 (2006): 61.



**2.6:** Fraser House, Lower Fort Garry, c.1830. *Author's photograph.*  
*This house was erected by HBC employee James Fraser at the Selkirk Settlement around 1830. The construction is typical of Red River area frame construction and is the type of construction that would have also been used by Cockran at the Indian Settlement. It was moved to Lower Fort Garry Historical Site in 1969.*

towards individualism favoured by Protestants, both in regards to spiritual conversion and work ethic.<sup>63</sup>

The buildings also reflect the desire to inculcate European norms through construction methods. The techniques emulate those common in the Red River Settlement itself with gable roofs, rectangular layouts and log construction (fig. 2.6).<sup>64</sup> The church, completed in 1836, was also of wooden construction. An illustration in the Anglican Bishop of

<sup>63</sup> West, *Journal*, 91; Prucha, "Two Roads," 134.

<sup>64</sup> Coutts, *Rapids*, 113-14; Cockran Journal, 16 October 1833, CMSA-C/C1/M1.



2.7: Red River Indian Settlement. Illustration from George Mountain, *The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal during a Visit to the Church Missionary Society's North-West American Mission* (1845).

Quebec G.J. Mountain's published account of a visit to the settlement shows a Georgian-church similar in style to many parish churches erected in Ontario and Quebec at this time, as well as those in the Red River settler parishes (fig. 2.7).<sup>65</sup>

The exact state of the structures at St.-Paul is less clear. The sole image of the mission appears to be from the 1845 journal of British Army officer, Henry J. Warre (fig. 2.8).<sup>66</sup>

While Warre's sketch only gives a vague impression of the mission, some key features

<sup>65</sup> Vicki Bennet, *Sacred Space and Structural Style: The Embodiment of Socio-Religious Ideology* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), 24-36.

<sup>66</sup> Henry J. Warre Journal from Red River to Columbia, 17 June 1845, Henry James Warre Fonds, LAC-R5587-0-2-E-002529.





2.8: “Mr. Belcour’s [sic] Church” at St.-Paul-des-Saulteaux, 17 June 1845 . Library and Archives Canada, Illustration from *To the Oregon Territory 1845 with Lieut. Henry J. Warre*

are immediately evident. Central to the image is the two-storied church with a hipped roof and tall belfry. Surrounding this structure are several other buildings, including an agricultural structure to the church’s left, possibly a barn. The mission is clearly laid out as a farming community, as demonstrated by the fenced fields immediately adjacent to the mission buildings. The first building erected was a mission house, which also served as a chapel and school.<sup>67</sup> Between 1834 and 1836, Belcourt continued to develop the settlement, laying out a plan for streets, houses, and fields; several houses were built within his plan by Saulteaux families in 1835. The church was erected in 1836 with a chapel occupying the upper story with a schoolroom below.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Provencher to Joseph Signay, 16 July 1834, *Lettres*, 137-39; “Notice sur les Missions de la Rivière Rouge,” 1 February 1836, LAC-MG17-A22-F840.10938.

<sup>68</sup> Provencher to Pierre-Flavien Turgeon, 6 August 1838, AASB-P1108-9.

The poor quality of surviving images and the lack of extant structures does not allow for significant analysis regarding stylistic trends in either the Catholic or Anglican missions. The buildings erected at these sites were very rudimentary, having been designed and constructed quickly by individuals with limited architectural expertise. Nevertheless, both served an important function: to inculcate Christian values to new and potential converts through the use of European built forms, to demonstrate Christian spatial arrangements in contrast to the surrounding landscape and traditional indigenous structures. The buildings and agricultural work completed by Belcourt and Cockran were also intended as a catalyst to encourage indigenous people to take up this lifestyle.<sup>69</sup>

Using architecture to promote conversion had a long history in North America dating back to the growth of “praying towns” in the Thirteen Colonies and the Christian settlements at Sillery and Kahnawake in New France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which also operated based on a convert and civilize model.<sup>70</sup> A clear example of planned infrastructure development focusing on conversion and civilization is the chain of Franciscan missions in Spanish-controlled Alta California, founded between 1769 and 1823. Although different from the Red River missions in a number of important respects, these missions actively integrated European architectural planning

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<sup>69</sup> Coutts, *Rapids*, 44.

<sup>70</sup> Alison Stanley, “The Praying Indian Towns: Encounter and Conversion Through Imposed Urban Space,” in *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places and Material Culture, 1600-1850*, ed. Daniel Maudlin and Bernard L. Herman, 142-61 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 143-45.



2.9: Edward Vischer, "North View of the Church and Ex-Mission of Santa Ines," 1865. University of California Berkley, BANC PIC 19xx 039 39 ALB.

into an agricultural mission in order to civilize local people in a controlled and ordered environment to remove them from the non-Christian, indigenous world.<sup>71</sup>

These missions consisted of ordered architectural complexes surrounded by agricultural lands, such as at Santa Inés, founded in 1804 (fig. 2.9).<sup>72</sup> Santa Inés also contained an "Indian village" of straight rows of houses where converts lived, regulating their lives around the agricultural model in a space divorced from their traditional villages, culture

<sup>71</sup> James S. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 8; Kubler, "Franciscan Architecture," 35.

<sup>72</sup> Allen, "Alta California," 69; Kubler, "Franciscan Architecture," 34.

and beliefs.<sup>73</sup> This was also Cockran and Belcourt's intent in encouraging converts to live in houses. Alongside the introduction of an agricultural economy and Christian belief, this type of mission aimed to inculcate converts with specific values associated with Christian settlement: faith, order, and industry. Faith clearly meant a commitment to the Christian God. But order and industry were more intimately tied to lifestyle and landscape.

Order was an idea that applied to everyday activities, time and environment; it was the regularization of life and land away from the perceived unpredictability of traditional indigenous movements. An ordered community had activities throughout the day, including participation in educational and religious activities, and throughout the year, in the agricultural seasons and in Christian religious feasts.<sup>74</sup> Missionaries were also concerned with spatial order, in demarcated fields, towns and buildings.<sup>75</sup> Order was viewed as an inherent contrast between the Christian and non-Christian worlds, the latter of which was seen as chaotic, uncivilized, and sinful, and the former rational, civilized and faithful.<sup>76</sup> Within the agricultural settlement model, order was viewed as inherent in the activities, lifestyle, and social structure of Christian communities. For example, while travelling throughout the South Pacific in the early 1820s, Sheffield philanthropist George Bennett wrote of the LMS missions there: "While these village

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<sup>73</sup> Ettinger, "Architecture as Order," 7-8.

<sup>74</sup> Mackenzie, "Missionaries," 122.

<sup>75</sup> Skeie, "God's Kingdom," 82-83; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:133.

<sup>76</sup> Pagden, *European Encounters*, 2; Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 94.



erections are thus coming forward, a new form of society if growing up with them...how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity instead of roving like fishes or littering like swine.”<sup>77</sup>

The settlement model also demonstrated a life based on Christian self-discipline, or industry. Industry was viewed as a commitment to doing hard work; it was disciplined and demonstrated a clear work ethic viewed as both morally and spiritually fulfilling, and lacking in indigenous life.<sup>78</sup> The idea of self-disciplined labour as a facet of Christian activity is often associated with Victorian Protestantism, but it was certainly also present in the ideologies of their Catholic counterparts; indeed industriousness was viewed by both as a characteristic possessed by Europeans, and not those of other races.<sup>79</sup> Industry was particularly associated with agricultural labour, but was also directly associated with the erection of buildings. Construction was seen as a disciplined form of work, not unlike tilling the soil.<sup>80</sup> Construction provided not only an industrious activity seen as lacking in non-Christian cultures but the presence of buildings was also an indicator of self-disciplined commitment to industry demonstrating prosperity gained through moral, dutiful activity.<sup>81</sup> The adoption of these values and their associated outward signs was consistently viewed by missionaries as a sign of true conversion, drawing a clear

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<sup>77</sup> George Bennet, *Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Reverend Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet* (New York: J. Levitt, 1831), 149.

<sup>78</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:135.

<sup>79</sup> Axtell, *European*, 51.

<sup>80</sup> Cockran Journal, 16 October 1833, CMSA-C/C1/M2.

<sup>81</sup> Francis, “Civilizing,” 59.

connection between the acceptance of Christian belief and the adoption of an agricultural economy and other European cultural practices.<sup>82</sup> For example, Peter Jones, missionary at the Methodist Credit Mission to the Mississauga in Upper Canada (fig. 2.10), made the contrast between Christians and non-Christians with regard to buildings, writing:

About ten years ago this people had not houses, no fields, no horses, no cattle, no pigs and no poultry. Each person could carry all he possessed on his back without being much bothered. They are now occupying about forty comfortable houses, most of which are built of hewn logs and a few of frame.<sup>83</sup>

In the village, Jones saw a clear contrast to non-Christian life demonstrating a change in societal order, work ethic and belief where converts were happier, more prosperous and spiritually fulfilled.<sup>84</sup> The benefits of Christian life were, for missionaries, immediately apparent in the development of Christian settlements, as articulated by John Williams, an LMS missionary in the Society Islands:

Instead of their little contemptible huts along the sea-beach, there will be a neat settlement, with a large chapel in the centre capable of containing 1,000 or 2,000 people; a school-house on the one side, and the chief's or the missionary's house on the other, and a range of white cottages, a mile or two miles long, peeping at you as it were under the splendid banana trees, or breadfruit groves, so that their comfort as well as their happiness is increased, and altogether their character is elevated.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 112; Norman Etherington, "Outward and Visible Signs of Conversion in Nineteenth-Century Kwazulu-Natal," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no. 4 (2002): 422-23.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Jones to Beecham, 16 February 1836, in Coates et al, *Means of Civilization*, 136.

<sup>84</sup> Gunson, *Messengers*, 272.

<sup>85</sup> Coates et al, *Means of Civilization*, 307.



2.10: “Indian Houses”, Credit Mission to the Mississauga, c.1820s. From Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life* (1883)

This was the ideal settlement that Cockran and Belcourt wanted to establish. Mission and settlement were to serve as a “a model to the Indians”<sup>86</sup>, transforming their life and culture through the inculcation of Euro-Christian norms and bringing the landscape into the Christian realm by changing it from wilderness to garden.

The settlement model was intended to function holistically, but, within it, individual buildings also had specific roles, as will be explored in subsequent chapters. Churches and schools served clear spiritual and educational purposes for introducing theology and

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<sup>86</sup> CMS, *Historical Notice*, 45.

a broad Euro-Christian worldview.<sup>87</sup>With a direct and tangible impact on evangelization, missionaries aimed to erect them at most mission stations. Architecturally, they could be expressed separately, or, as at St-Paul, as individual spaces within one building with the eventual goal to have devoted structures.<sup>88</sup>The other key structure of the agricultural mission station was the mission house. At its most basic, the mission house provided a place for the missionary to live and work. But it also provided a vivid model as to how missionaries expected Christians to live.<sup>89</sup> Missionaries hoped that indigenous people would follow this model and build their own homes in the image of the mission house. This was the marker of conversion to civilized living through the rejection of nomadism on an individual level, vividly illustrated through the differences in pre-and post-conversion dwellings.<sup>90</sup>Auxiliary buildings, such as barns and mills, were also erected to serve the needs of a farming community. Through these structures individually and as comprising the mission station as a whole, Cockran and Belcourt intended to completely replace the lifestyle and culture of their converts with a model Christian community, founded on the economic, moral and social principles of the civilizing mission.

However, sedentary missions were not without their critics. Despite missionaries' desire to instil Christian values through civilization, the agricultural mission came under

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<sup>87</sup> Porter, "Commerce and Christianity," 609; Jones and Cockran, Report, 1835, CMSA-C/C1/M2.

<sup>88</sup> Provencher to Plessis, 15 January 1819, in *Lettres*, 33.

<sup>89</sup> Roberts, "Christian Home," 134-35.

<sup>90</sup> Edgerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life, Being Reminiscences of Sixty Years' Public Service in Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1884), 58-62.

significant scrutiny for its practicality and results. Many in the HBC did not like the settled mission due to the potential impact on trapping and trading, indigenous peoples' key contribution to the Company's business, which could not be facilitated through the agricultural model.<sup>91</sup> However, it was Belcourt's mission that came under the most scrutiny and from an unlikely source: Provencher.

Although initially supportive, Provencher quickly recognized the expense of the station as well as the Saulteaux's relative lack of interest. While Provencher saw civilization as a goal of mission, he also believed that conversion to Christianity was not dependant on it and could be achieved through preaching and the sacraments alone.<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, he found the methods used by Belcourt to be too similar to those of the CMS, concerned about "conduct[ing]missions like the Protestants."<sup>93</sup> Both he and Plessis believed that ambulatory missions were the best way to evangelize nomadic communities, and that civilization would eventually follow.<sup>94</sup> They also felt that a project such as Belcourt's was not the best use of resources for a young mission, especially given the expense of construction.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ray, *Fur Trade*, 203.

<sup>92</sup> Brenda Jean Gainer, "The Catholic Missionaries as Agents of Social Change Among the Métis and Indians of Red River, 1818-1845," (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1978), 35; Provencher to Panet, 18 July 1828, *Lettres*, 123.

<sup>93</sup> Provencher to Signay, 16 July 1834, *Lettres*, 138. "faire des missions à la protestante"

<sup>94</sup> McCarthy, *To Evangelize*, 19.

<sup>95</sup> McCarthy, *To Evangelize*, 84; Huel, *Proclaiming*, 13-14.

Cockran's mission met with more positive feedback in part because it was more successful as well as the CMS' entrenched commitment to this type of mission.

Cockran's superiors were also at a distance and unaware of the mission's shortcomings.

Yet, like Belcourt, his most staunch criticism came from within. CMS missionary John

Smithurst argued that indigenous people should continue to hunt because it

was economically necessary. He also felt that Cockran was too paternalistic towards his

converts, conditioning them towards charity as opposed to industry.<sup>96</sup> But Smithurst's

major criticism was that Cockran's method did not put enough emphasis on Christianity

itself, but rather was "concerned too much with the temporal wants of his people as if

civilization was a primary and evangelism a secondary object."<sup>97</sup>

### *Northern Expansion*

Throughout the 1830s, neither mission expanded in any significant way. This was not

due to a lack of will but rather to two other factors. The first was a severe personnel

shortage, something both organizations grappled with until the end of the century. The

second was opposition from the HBC.<sup>98</sup> Simpson was particularly concerned over the

potential transformation of indigenous people into settled farmers, seeing each new

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<sup>96</sup> Pannekoek, "Agricultural Zions," 58.

<sup>97</sup> John Smithurst Journal, 8 July 1847, CMSA-C/C1/M4.

<sup>98</sup> James Hargrave to Colin Robertson, 31 October 1849, HBCA-B.239/b/101.



**2.11:** Fort Temiskaming, 1887. *Library and Archives Canada, C-013800*  
*The mission can be seen on the left-hand shore.*

mission as a threat to trade. “Every mission, if successful,” he wrote, “must be considered the germ of a future village.”<sup>99</sup> Simpson was also afraid that crop failure, not an unlikely scenario, at settled missions outside the fertile southern prairies could quickly lead to starvation.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, many in the HBC viewed missions as “a very heavy drain on the limited resources of this country”<sup>101</sup> requiring transport, provisioning and the erection of infrastructure.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Simpson, in E.E. Rich, *History of the Hudson’s Bay Company, 1670-1870* (London: The Hudson’s Bay Company Record Society, 1959), 2:528.

<sup>100</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 32; Karamanski, *Fur Trade*, 18-21.

<sup>101</sup> Eden Colville to HBC Committee, 21 July 1852, in E.E. Rich, *London Inward Correspondence from Eden Colville, 1849-1852* (London: The Hudson’s Bay Company Record Society, 1956), 194.

<sup>102</sup> *Select Committee* (1857), 242; Coutts, *Road*, 67-70.

Despite these concerns, the HBC did little to actively limit expansion, believing that neither missionary organization had the resources to do so. This changed, however, when two priests were sent from Québec to Fort Temiskaming in 1836 explicitly to convert indigenous people; suddenly Catholic missionaries had penetrated deep into the heart of fur trading country, planting a cross and building a rough mission house (fig.2.11).<sup>103</sup> Fearful of unchecked growth, the HBC placed a blanket ban on all mission expansion.<sup>104</sup> The Temiskaming mission, however, was remained.

While, realistically, the HBC could not prevent evangelization, it could certainly withhold resources and Simpson explicitly told his staff to do so.<sup>105</sup> Simpson hoped to check expansion in this way as both organizations relied on the HBC for transit and supplies. CMS missionary Robert Hunt wryly remarked “they [the HBC] could probably disable you simply by letting you alone.”<sup>106</sup> This was especially true of building as the HBC could, and did, refuse labour, supplies, and permission for building at their posts, putting the understaffed missionary organizations completely at their mercy.<sup>107</sup> Catholic missionaries found this out in an 1842 drive to establish a new mission at Abitibi when

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<sup>103</sup> A.H. Telfer, *Worth Travelling Miles to See: Diary of a Survey Trip to Lake Temiskaming, 1886*, ed. Lorene DiCorpo (Toronto: Northern Heritage, 2004), 97-101; Northern Department, Minutes, March 1838, HBCA-D.6/24.

<sup>104</sup> Simpson to HBC Committee, 20 June 1841, in Glyndwr Williams, *London Correspondence Inward from Sir George Simpson* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1973), 25.

<sup>105</sup> Simpson to Murdoch McPherson, 3 June 1845, HBCA-D.4/32; *Select Committee* (1857), 242.

<sup>106</sup> Robert Hunt Journal, August 1853, CMSA-C/C1/O34/66.

<sup>107</sup> Hargrave to Mason, 1 December 1849, HBCA-B.139/b/101.



Simpson denied permission to build a church in an attempt to limit the growing Catholic influence around James Bay; Simpson was not only anti-mission, but also anti-Catholic, reflecting a wider distrust in British society toward Catholicism.<sup>108</sup> Although Simpson eventually relented, Father Moreau recognized the blow that the HBC could deliver to missions by denying them a permanent foothold: “without it,” he wrote, “the mission will never or hardly ever make progress.”<sup>109</sup> Despite this, the 1840s marked a period of expansion for both Protestant and Catholic missions, relying both on their own resources and the sporadic aid of individual post officers.

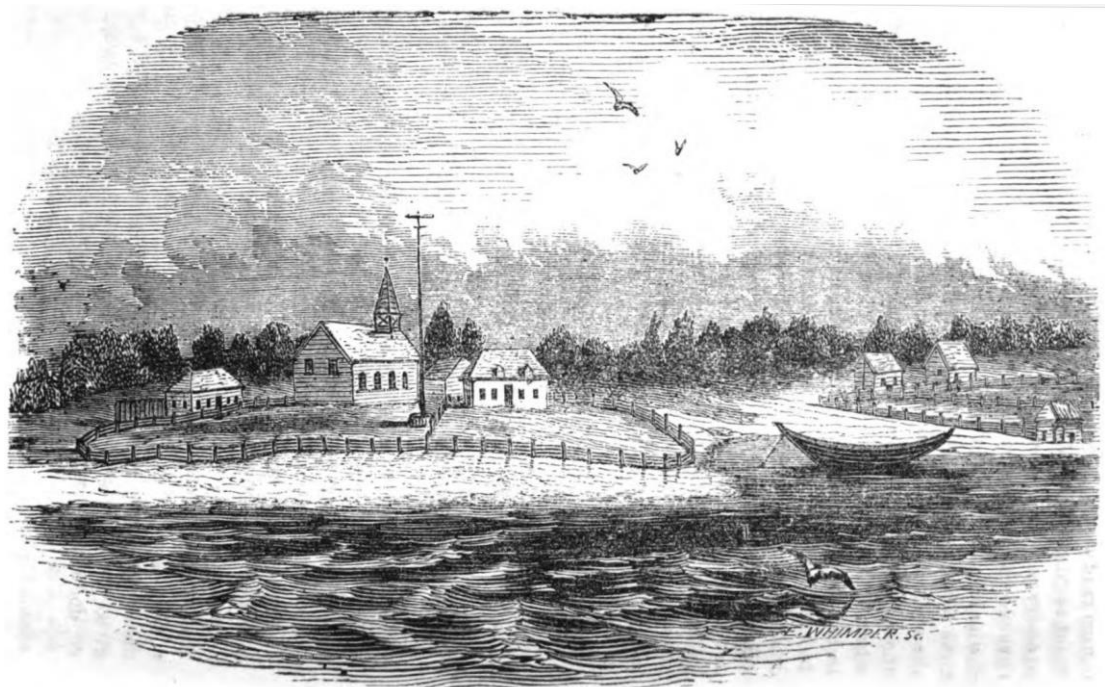
However, the precedent for major expansion came from another organization: the British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS), which entered Rupert’s Land in 1840 at the invitation of the HBC with an explicit mandate to minister to indigenous people. Although concerned about the effect of agricultural settlement, the Company remained under pressure from home to produce more results in the Christianization of its indigenous trading partners.<sup>110</sup> The Methodists entered the territory with the understanding that their missions were to be itinerate, aligning more closely with the

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<sup>108</sup> Williams, “Introduction,” *London Correspondence*, vii; x; John Wolffe, “Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire, 1815-1914,” in *Empires of Religion*, 44.

<sup>109</sup> Moreau to [Signay], 2 October 1841, *Rapport* 4 (1842): 72-73. “...sans cela, la mission ne fera pas ou presque pas de progrès.”

<sup>110</sup> Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion : The History of Canadian Methodists* (Montreal : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 174; Choquette, *Oblate Assault*, 112,



**ROSSVILLE WESLEYAN MISSION STATION, HUDSON'S-BAY.**

2.12: Rossville Wesleyan Mission Station, 1853

Illustration from John Ryerson, *Hudson's Bay; or, a Missionary Tour of the Territory of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company*, 88.

Company's need.<sup>111</sup> As a result, four Methodist missions were established in HBC territory at Moose Factory, Lac La Pluie, Norway House and Fort Edmonton.

However, the Methodists, like their counterparts at Red River, were ultimately interested in the development of settled missions.<sup>112</sup> Particularly, the model settlement of Rossville, established by James Evans near Norway House, was specifically intended to inculcate Christian values and ideology in a mission station setting, and included a

<sup>111</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 100-102.

<sup>112</sup> Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 174-75; William Howard Brooks, "British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Activities in the Hudson's Bay Company Territory, 1840-1854," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Study Sessions* 37 (1970): 28.

church, school, parsonage and auxiliary agricultural buildings to promote an industrious, Christian lifestyle (fig. 2.12), as well as houses for indigenous converts.<sup>113</sup> While this was not what the Methodists had promised, it was consistent with their mission practice elsewhere.

The Methodist missions were a dismal failure and were abandoned by 1850. However, they set a powerful precedent for the other missionary organizations in Rupert's Land to spread beyond Red River.<sup>114</sup> Particularly, they provided powerful impetus for the dispatch of Jean-Baptiste Thibault in 1842 by Provencher to Fort Edmonton.

Provencher, who had been made titular Bishop of Juliopolis in 1822 and would become the first Vicar Apostolic of the North-West in 1844, was not pleased about the favour showed to the Methodists and applied to Simpson in 1840 for permission to expand.<sup>115</sup> This request was denied. Nevertheless, Provencher decided to proceed, having been given assurance from two priests dispatched to British Columbia from Québec in 1838 that indigenous people were eager for instruction; the Métis community at Fort Edmonton had also asked for a priest to administer to their spiritual needs.<sup>116</sup> Thibault travelled west in 1842 and again in 1843 where he itinerated widely

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<sup>113</sup> Mason, "British North America," *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1 (April 1845): 414.

<sup>114</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 100-101.

<sup>115</sup> Provencher to Signay, 25 June 1840, in *Lettres*, 184; Simpson to Provencher, 17 February 1840, HBCA-D.4/25.

<sup>116</sup> Champagne, *Missions Catholiques*, 63; "Missions de la Colombie," *Rapport* 1 (1840): 16; Provencher to Signay, 2 January 1843, in *Lettres*, 212.

around Fort Edmonton, as far north as Peace River, entering directly into contest with the Methodists.<sup>117</sup> He was convinced of the need to establish a permanent regional base, and erected a house and chapel in 1844 to establish the mission of Lac Ste. Anne near Fort Edmonton where there was a large Métis population, and indigenous people regularly visited the fort.<sup>118</sup>

Despite this initial success, Provencher remained severely understaffed.<sup>119</sup> As a result, he turned to the religious orders in an attempt to bolster personnel numbers, with as little cost as possible. By 1844, he had secured the services of the Grey Nuns, four of whom arrived at Red River to provide educational and welfare services.<sup>120</sup> Provencher also found support from the Oblates who had established a mission in Québec in 1841.<sup>121</sup> The Oblates were initially able to provide Provencher with two priests: Pierre Aubert and Taché who arrived at Red River in late summer 1845. Taché, along with secular priest Louis-François Laflèche, was sent the following year to open a station at Île-à-la-Crosse, the administrative centre of the English River District.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Thibault to Provencher, 6 April 1845, in *Lettres*, 249; Thibault to Provencher, 6 May 1846, in *Lettres*, 254.

<sup>118</sup> Levasseur, *Les Oblats*, 13-14; Émile Légal, *Short Sketches of the History of the Catholic Church and Missions in Central Alberta* (Winnipeg : West Canada Publishing, 1914), 11; Provencher to Signay, 6 July 1844, in *Lettres*, 234; "Missions d'Amerique," *Annals* 40 (1868): 242.

<sup>119</sup> Belcourt to Signay, 1 August 1842, *Rapport* 5 (1843): 19.

<sup>120</sup> Champagne, *Missions Catholiques*, 66.

<sup>121</sup> Levasseur, *Les Oblats*, 23-25.

<sup>122</sup> Taché, *Vingt Années*, 11-12.

Île-à-la-Crosse had been identified by Thibault as a key point for missionary expansion and an excellent site for a station and a gateway to what the Oblates had deemed “the extremities of the globe.”<sup>123</sup> The establishment at Île-à-la-Crosse was made possible by chief trader, Roderick Mackenzie, who recognized that the local indigenous people were interested in Christianity and, hoping that the presence of a missionary would help tie them to the post, issued the Oblates with an unauthorized invitation to establish a mission.<sup>124</sup>

While Île-à-la-Crosse was outside of what was considered the far north, it provided an important stage in the development of Catholic missions, by reorienting them towards a northern context. Unlike Red River and Lac Ste. Anne, there was no non-indigenous settlement here; the potential for agriculture was also limited because of the climate. The model developed at Île-à-la-Crosse was that of a central, yet remote, mission with a large catchment area and several outpost missions served by the resident priest on an itinerate circuit.<sup>125</sup> While agriculture was eventually attempted, beginning with a kitchen garden, the mission station developed much more slowly than that at St.-Paul.

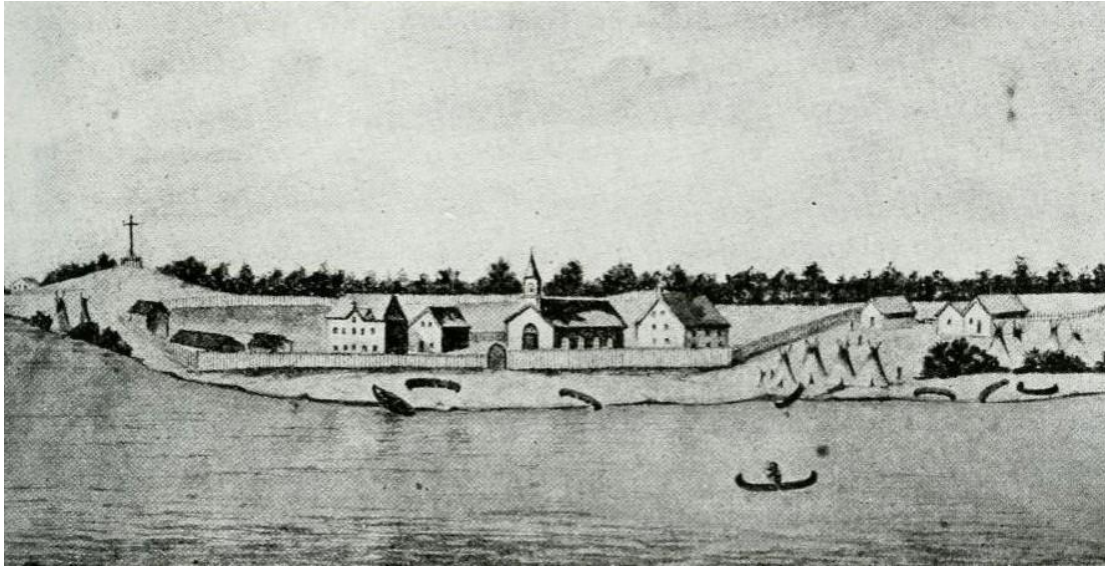
Architecturally, Île-à-la-Crosse also served as a model for the initial development of northern stations. The first mission building erected was a house-chapel, 36 by 24 feet,

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<sup>123</sup> Provencher to Plessis, 18 May 1818 in *Lettres*, 8. “...limites du globe.”

<sup>124</sup> Mackenzie to Simpson, 1 July 1845, HBCA-D5/14.

<sup>125</sup> “Missions d’Amérique,” 239-40.



**2.13:** Roman Catholic Mission, Île-à-la-Crosse. Illustration from Théophile Ortolan, *Les Oblates de Marie Immaculée durant le premier siècle de leur existence*, vol. 4, 125.

built under Mackenzie's direction in summer 1847.<sup>126</sup> This structure served as both chapel and mission house, effectively creating an entire mission station under a single roof. With a scattered population and limited resources, this was a realistic foundation for the mission. While functionally practical, it also served as a vital marker of Catholic presence in the region, which Thibault saw as extremely important.<sup>127</sup> The house-chapel was, for Île-à-la-Crosse and the surrounding area, regarded as a tangible and material means of establishing presence, as well as providing a base for further expansion.<sup>128</sup> As the mission consolidated, it grew with a separate church and new house erected by 1858; a convent containing a school, hospital and orphanage was erected to house the

<sup>126</sup> Taché, *Vingt Années*, 18-22; Taché to [Provencher], n.d., *Rapport* 9 (1851): 120.

<sup>127</sup> Thibault to Provencher, 24 July 1845, in *Lettres*, 250.

<sup>128</sup> Champagne, *Missions Catholiques*, 77.



**2.14:** Fort Abitibi, 1887. *Library and Archives Canada, C-013802*

Grey Nuns in 1868 (fig. 2.13).<sup>129</sup>As the Oblates moved north towards to the Mackenzie River District, this was the model upon which they would base subsequent missions, modifying it to suit local conditions.

Simultaneously, the Oblates were also moving north from Temiskaming, after taking over the Diocese of Québec's eastern mission to Temiskaming, Saguenay and southern Labrador in the early 1840s. Their immediate goal was James Bay, a region, like English River, unsuited to widespread agricultural development. One of the earliest missions in

<sup>129</sup> Taché to Dawson, 7 February 1859, *Missions* 2 (1863): 171; "Missions d'Amerique," 239.

this region was at Abitibi, taken over by Oblate Nicolas Laverlochère in 1844. After his initial refusal, Simpson grudgingly gave permission for the erection of a church, completed in 1846, marking the presence of a Catholic mission in the region (fig. 2.14). Like at Île-à-la-Crosse, the Abitibi mission was demarcated by a building, although it did not contain living quarters; Laverlochère initially lived in a tent.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, the church demonstrated the presence of Christianity within the landscape and, of it, Laverlochère wrote: “a modest temple is finally raised to God by the nations in these places where formerly the devil reined sovereign.”<sup>131</sup>

Like their Catholic counterparts, the CMS also embarked on a programme of expansion in the 1840s. They, however, did not have a religious order from which to draw nor Canadian personnel and understaffing made them unable to expand at the same rate. Financial problems at home also put a severe strain on resources.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, by the late 1830s, the Anglican mission was negotiating expansion to Cumberland House with the HBC, a request given measured support by 1840 in an effort to stop the flow of indigenous people interested in Christianity to Red River. By the end of the decade, the CMS had established three new stations at Fairford, The Pas and Lac la Ronge.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Kerry Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community and Identity in Northeastern Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 36; “Mission du lac Abbitibi,” *Rapport 2* (1840): 47; Moreau to [Signay], 2 October 1841, *Rapport 4* (1842): 69; Laverlochère to [Signay], 15 October 1846, *Rapport 7* (1845): 89.

<sup>131</sup> Nicolas Laverlochère to [Signay], 15 October 1846, 87. “...un modest temple est enfin élevée au Dieu des nations dans ces lieux où naguères l'esprit infernal regnant en souverain.”

<sup>132</sup> *Proceedings* (1840), 110.

<sup>133</sup> *Proceedings* (1838), 126.





2.15: Cumberland Mission. *Church Missionary Intelligencer* 1, (1850): 475

Fairford was established in 1842 as an outstation of the Indian Settlement by missionary Abraham Cowley and was modeled after it, with a church, mission house and school quickly erected to serve a small agricultural settlement of indigenous converts.<sup>134</sup> The Pas, located a distance from Cumberland House, was similarly oriented around agriculture, but its location further to the north made cultivation increasingly difficult. Originally founded at Cumberland House in 1840 by Henry Budd, an indigenous catechist trained by West, the mission was moved to The Pas by CMS missionary James Hunter in 1845 in order to take advantage of better soil to integrate agriculture with seasonal

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<sup>134</sup> Boon, *Anglican Church*, 51-53; *Proceedings* (1842), 288.

subsistence hunting and fishing.<sup>135</sup> Budd, although indigenous, had taken on the early CMS belief in the interconnectedness of Christianity, civilization and agriculture and, as a result, aimed to replicate the Indian Settlement outside of Red River, building a small mission house and farm at Cumberland (fig.2.15), despite difficult growing conditions; after the removal of the mission to The Pas, Hunter continued this approach, erecting a mission house, school and a large Gothic church, and encouraging indigenous converts to build houses and farm.<sup>136</sup> By 1852, he wrote of the stations:

Here I truly rejoice in my work and am thankful for what God is doing by me; a Christian village is springing up around us, Christianization and Civilization are going hand in hand and everything had the appearance of progress.<sup>137</sup>

Despite the move northward, agriculture was still possible and the model established at Red River was successfully put into action.

Like Thibault, Hunter was eager to expand north. As early as 1847, he looked towards the Mackenzie as a major goal for the CMS' western programme, especially after reports that Taché had reached Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca.<sup>138</sup> Favourable conditions at Lac la Ronge as well as interest on the part of local indigenous leaders led Hunter to dispatch native catechist James Settee to establish a rudimentary mission station in 1846. From here, the CMS aimed to penetrate the north, and undermine the Catholic

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<sup>135</sup> Frank Peake, "The Achievements and Frustrations of James Hunter," *JCHS* 19 (1977): 40; Katherine Pettipas, "'The Praying Chief': Reverend Henry Budd," *JCHS* 33, no. 1 (1991): 45.

<sup>136</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 87; Hunter, Report on Cumberland Station, August 1847, CMSA-C/C1/M4; "Cumberland Station," 476.

<sup>137</sup> Hunter to Venn, 2 August 1852, CMSA-C/C1/O35/24A.

<sup>138</sup> Hunter to CMS, 2 August 1847, CMSA-C/C1/M4.

mission at Île-à-la-Crosse. By the following year, Settee had erected a mission house, school house and small kitchen garden: an establishment not unlike that erected by Taché and Laflèche, but with a clear agricultural focus, although this was becoming increasingly difficult the further north the CMS expanded.<sup>139</sup> The Lac la Ronge mission would eventually be moved and re-established by Robert Hunt as the Stanley Mission on the nearby Churchill River due to better agricultural potential, supporting a large complex of structures and a massive Gothic church by the end of the 1850s (fig. 2.16).<sup>140</sup> But Settee's early establishment foresaw the conditions the CMS would have to face as they moved north and large scale agricultural settlement became less and less viable.

Despite these efforts, the CMS still made less progress than their Catholic counterparts, primarily due to a sheer lack of personnel. The 1849 appointment of David Anderson as Bishop of Rupert's Land, made possible due to a substantial endowment from the late Chief Factor of Cumberland House, James Leith, marked a major turning point.<sup>141</sup> Hunter wrote that Anderson would be "a spiritual father and counsellor at hand, who will give unity to our efforts, and organize and carry out plans for the evangelization of this extensive country,"<sup>142</sup> simultaneously creating a more equal footing between Anglicans and Catholics by providing an administrative foil for Provencher.<sup>143</sup> While the CMS

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<sup>139</sup> Hunter, Report on Lac la Ronge Station, August 1847 CMSA-C/C1/M4.

<sup>140</sup> Kristie Dubé, "Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Stanley Mission (1856-1860), Saskatchewan" *JSSAC* 39, no. 1 (2014): 57-70.

<sup>141</sup> Boon, *Anglican Church*, 58-59.

<sup>142</sup> Hunter to Venn, 9 August 1849, CMSA-C/C1/M4.

<sup>143</sup> Hunter to CMS, 2 August 1849, CMSA-C/C1/M4.



2.16: Stanley Mission Church, c.1919. *Saskatchewan Archives Board, SB581*

viewed bishops as unnecessary for missionary expansion, the presence of one in the North-West would allow for easier on the ground operations and coordination, especially given the extent of the territory and the difficulties of communicating directly with London. Furthermore, Anderson, while not a member of the CMS, was a long-time supporter of it and of a civilization-first approach.<sup>144</sup> This was a time when the influence of the CMS and their evangelical allies was growing as they worked to place the expanding missionary church on an evangelical footing; while Anderson was not technically one of their own, he was an ally and sympathetic to the CMS' organizational mandate, making him an acceptable choice to administer the Northwest missions.<sup>145</sup> Also, like Hunter, he saw the north as the future of the CMS in North America and began to accelerate the process of expansion.

### *Conclusion*

By mid-century, both the CMS and OMI were poised to enter into the far north. With the CMS entrenched at The Pas and Lac la Ronge and the OMI at Île-à-la-Crosse in the west and Abitibi in the east, both were ready to draw on their experiences in the south and apply these lessons to the northern frontier. While the north held romantic allure as the ultimate field for evangelism, both organizations had clear strategies which drew on the

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<sup>144</sup> Yates, *Victorian Bishops*, 20; den Otter "Anderson," 82.

<sup>145</sup> Hardwick, *Settler Empire*, 115.

establishment of missions in the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s in regions with more favourable conditions. While each eyed northern indigenous people as a great unenlightened population in need of the gospel, they also viewed each other as a foe against which there would be a struggle for territory and souls. The HBC, thus far unable to control the two organizations, continued to endeavour to keep missionaries out of Athabasca, the Mackenzie and Hudson Bay coast.<sup>146</sup>

The agricultural missions established at St.-Paul-des-Saultaux and the Indian Settlement were the ultimate goal: in these missions, indigenous people could be converted and civilized, in theory, through the inculcation of ideas around social structure, morality and work that were directly at odds with the natural environment. But the conditions missionaries found at both Île-à-la-Crosse and Lac la Ronge were a sobering reminder that a northern strategy for mission station development had to be based on different assumptions than in the south. Certainly, these posts were not the vast, frozen north that many believed they would eventually encounter but they nevertheless reinforced the notion that missions were venturing into a great unknown where their approach to infrastructure development would have to be modified in order to succeed and survive. The question of how to inculcate the Christian values associated with civilization suddenly became more difficult to answer: without agricultural potential and the opportunity for the development of settlements, missionaries would be forced to assess

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<sup>146</sup> E. Colvile to Simpson, 14 July 1851, in *Inward Correspondence*, 225.

their priorities and develop a strategy that reflected the realities on the ground. There would eventually be agriculture in the north, and there would be large mission complexes, but missionaries entered the territory with the knowledge that the model established by Cockran and Belcourt was in need of reassessment.

### 3: Mission Networks in the Far North

The first three decades of mission activity had brought limited results for both organizations. Their range was small, their missions limited and what they perceived as the north had only been breached in a limited capacity by missionaries, despite decades of activity by explorers and the HBC. But this changed in 1849 when Father Henri Faraud arrived at Fort Chipewyan, first visited by Taché two years earlier, to establish a permanent mission. Two years later, CMS catechist John Horden arrived at Moose Factory on the James Bay coast to take over a mission left vacant by the Methodists in 1847. These two missions were the first in what the CMS and OMI considered to be the north, setting the stage for the development and expansion of missions in the 1850s and 1860s.

Expansion occurred on two fronts: the Mackenzie River and the Hudson-James Bay coast (figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3). Although geographically separate, a similar narrative played out



almost simultaneously to gain control of territory in what became a bitter denominational rivalry.<sup>1</sup> Both organizations fought for control of the mission field and the allegiance of the region's indigenous people, turning the northern part of the continent into "the theatre of continuous struggle between Catholic and Protestant"<sup>2</sup> for the remainder of the century.<sup>3</sup> Both organizations were obsessed with gaining the north, making expansion rapid, aggressive and exacerbated by denominational conflict.<sup>4</sup>

The fight for control of the north was manifested through building, specifically the construction of mission stations. These were not mission stations like those at Red River, but were small rudimentary and often consisting of a single building, a combined mission house-chapel structure. It was assumed by both organizations that the work in the north would be much like that at Île-à-la-Crosse and Lac la Ronge, with a central station, outstations and a large itinerate circuit, but on a much larger geographic scale.<sup>5</sup> These initial stations were intended to mark the Christian frontier, or zone of influence, of each respective organization. These stations provided vital contact points with indigenous communities as missionaries attempted to mark their presence and

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<sup>1</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 105; Zaslow, *Canadian North*, 70; Claude Champagne, *Les débuts de la mission dans le Nord-Ouest canadien: Mission et Église chez Mgr. Grandin, o.m.i. (1829-1902)* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'University d'Ottawa, 1983), 70.

<sup>2</sup> Émile Grouard, *Souvenirs de mes Soixante Ans Apostolat dan l'Athabaska-Mackenzie* (Lyon: Oeuvre Apostolique de Marie Immaculée, 195), 138. "le théâtre d'une lutte continuelle entre catholiques et protestants."

<sup>3</sup> Grollier to Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1971.0220-202.

<sup>4</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 107.

<sup>5</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 170; Clut to Fabre, 17 August 1885, AD-GLPP-719.



**3.1:** *Key Northern Missions*



**3.2:** *Lake Athabasca*



### **3.3:***Southern James Bay*

convey their message in a land unsuited to the model developed at Red River. As a result, the initial expansion of both organizations into the north focussed on the selection of locations deemed both strategic and sustainable. The north's environmental conditions, alongside the race to gain control of the territory, meant the strategy employed by missionaries involved the creation of small missions to control larger territorial networks, as opposed to focussing resources on larger agricultural settlements, in their initial effort to push back the wilderness and introduce Christianity to the north.



**3.4:** Fort Chipewyan, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-363-F-29-C33*

### *Establishing Missions: Fort Chipewyan and Moose Factory*

Fort Chipewyan (fig. 3.4) was established by the NWC in 1788 as a hub for the Athabasca, Peace and Mackenzie watersheds and operational base for the fur trade and inland exploration.<sup>6</sup> In their 1821 merger with the NWC, the HBC retained the post, because of its regional significance and it was natural that missionaries would look to this post as a staging point for northern expansion. Taché visited the post in 1847,

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<sup>6</sup> James Parker, *Emporium of the North: Fort Chipewyan and the Fur Trade to 1835* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1987), 12; Patricia A. McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History, 1788-1920s* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 21.



**3.5:** Catholic Mission, Fort Chipewyan, c.1893. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-045364*  
*This is the mission as it appeared in 1893 – the original buildings erected by Faraud have all been replaced.*

seeing it as a strategic location for northern missionary work and contact with the Dene.<sup>7</sup>

Henri Faraud was sent to the post in 1849, returning in 1850 to establish a permanent mission. Provencher had written to Simpson outlining that the Dene had asked for a priest; Simpson granted permission for a permanent mission and ordered that wood for

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<sup>7</sup> Gaston Carrière, "Fondation et développement des missions catholiques dans le Terre de Rupert et les Territoires du Nord-Ouest (1845-1861)," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 41 (1971): 398; Alexandre Taché, *Notes sur l'établissement de la Mission d'Athabaska* (n.p: n.d), 4.



3.6: Moose Factory, c. 1870. *Library and Archives Canada, C-001718*

building be prepared.<sup>8</sup> Although Taché was initially welcomed warmly by Chief Trader Francis Ermatinger, Faraud was less enthusiastically received by Ermatinger's successor, James Anderson. Anderson believed that a mission at Chipewyan would disrupt the food supply, and deplete its fishery, suggesting instead that the priests establish at either Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake or Fond du Lac, neither of which was in his jurisdiction, and visit Chipewyan as an outstation.<sup>9</sup> However, Taché and Faraud understood the importance of Chipewyan as a central post and were determined to build there.<sup>10</sup> A mission house was erected by early spring 1851 at a site chosen by Taché

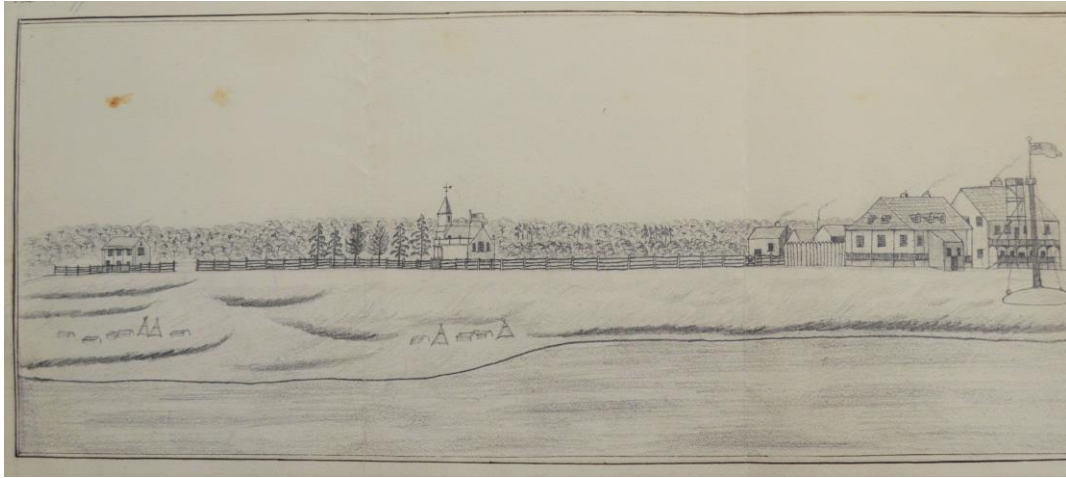
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<sup>8</sup> Carrière, "Fondation," 400; Levasseur, *Les Oblats*, 75.

<sup>9</sup> James Anderson to Donald Ross, 4 December 1850, HBCA-B.39/b/12; McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan*, 104.

<sup>10</sup> Anderson to Northern Department, 20 February 1853, HBCA-B.39/b/13.





**3.7:** Drawing of Moose Factory and Existing Mission Buildings by John Horden, 1852.  
*Church Missionary Society Archives, C/C1/O33/10B.*

on his first visit, near a swamp he believed could be drained for fields and gardens.<sup>11</sup>

Anderson, at Simpson's behest, cut wood for both the house and a small church and assisted with the erection of the former, but refused to build the church until explicitly ordered to do so. A small church was completed in September (fig. 3.5).<sup>12</sup>

As Faraud established himself at Fort Chipewyan, the CMS chose to expand elsewhere: at Moose Factory on the southern end of James Bay (fig. 3.3). One of the Company's oldest posts, Moose Factory was the administrative centre for the HBC's Southern District. Well-situated for supply and access, missionaries could extend south from the post into the James Bay Lowlands and north along the Hudson Bay coast.<sup>13</sup> Although

<sup>11</sup> Henri Faraud, *Dix-Huit Ans Chez les Sauvages* (Paris: Régis Ruffet et Cie., 1866), 120; McCarthy, *Great River*, 38.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson to Eden Colville, 6 December 1850, HBCA-B.39/b/12; Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 133.

<sup>13</sup> Long, "Education," 79.

originally granted to the Methodists, it was abandoned by missionary George Barnley in 1847 after sustained personal conflict with Chief Factor Robert Miles.<sup>14</sup>

On Barnley's abrupt departure, the CMS moved to fill the gap, sending out teacher John Horden and his wife Elizabeth in 1851. Horden was not ordained, but the CMS was anxious to gain influence in the region as Laverlochère came north from Temiskaming, the Oblates' regional base, in 1847 in order to claim the post for the Oblates.<sup>15</sup> Although Miles repelled Laverlochère, preventing him from building a chapel, it was vital that the CMS move quickly.<sup>16</sup> Venn wrote to David Anderson in early 1851 that the Society would "send out a schoolmaster certified to act as a catechist rather than omit [MS illegible] supply for a station which presents such a strong opportunity for the church and the Society."<sup>17</sup>

Horden, who was ordained in 1852, was placed in a unique situation on his arrival: Barnley had left behind both a mission house and church, erected in the 1840s with HBC assistance.<sup>18</sup> There is no description of the house beyond a drawing done by Horden in 1852 (fig. 3.7), but he remarked in a report to the CMS that the church was "a small but neat little building with accommodation for about a hundred, there is a reading desk in it

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<sup>14</sup> John S. Long, "The Reverend George Barnley, Wesleyan Methodism and the Fur Trade Company Families of James Bay," *Ontario History* 77, 1 (1985): 44.

<sup>15</sup> Abel, *Changing Places*, 36; Carrière, "Nord-Oriental," 397.

<sup>16</sup> Long, "John Horden," 87; Robert Miles to Simpson, 14 February 1848, HBCA-B.135/b/51.

<sup>17</sup> Venn to David Anderson, 3 April 1851, CMSA-C/C1/L.2.

<sup>18</sup> Long, "Barnley," 54.





**3.8:** Anglican Mission, Moose Factory (after 1884). *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7543-18*

but no pulpit.”<sup>19</sup>As a result, Horden was able to move onto other building projects. A temporary schoolhouse was erected with donated assistance from Miles in 1854.<sup>20</sup>Horden was also able to successfully petition Simpson for the enlargement of the Methodist church, which was already too small for the number of worshippers, although Horden soon erected a completely new building, between 1856 and 1864, with a chancel added in 1884 (fig. 3.8).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Horden to Venn, 20 August 1851, CMSA-C/C1/O33/1.

<sup>20</sup> Horden to Henry Knight, 2 February, 1854, CMSA-C/C1/O33/15.

<sup>21</sup> Horden to Hector Strath, 1 September 1854, CMSA-C/C1/O33/17A. See also: Horden, Report, 31 August 1853, CMSA-C/C1/O33/100.

The establishment of these two stations marked the beginning of rapid expansion throughout the north. Over the next ten years, both organizations reached the Arctic Ocean, establishing permanent stations, around the Hudson-James Bay coast, Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers, erecting buildings to serve what they hoped would be new and growing Christian populations. Both organizations also found more success in some areas: the Oblates on Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie, and the CMS on Hudson Bay and in the Yukon. Yet each continued in a frenzied push to establish new missions, expanding their operations in an attempt to take control of the north.

The rapid growth of missions throughout the 1850s and early 1860s can, in many ways, be attributed to the intensive competition between the two increasingly-hostile organizations.<sup>22</sup> Both organizations wanted to control the evangelization of the territory and worked against one another to achieve these aims, pushing further and faster than would have been the case had they not been expanding simultaneously. Vital-Justin Grandin, who became coadjutor bishop of St.-Boniface in 1857, remarked in 1860 that: “the Protestant ministers pursue us everywhere and sometimes force us, if not to be more zealous, at least to undertake more missions than we would otherwise do.”<sup>23</sup> The

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<sup>22</sup> Carrière, “Response,” 68; Choquette, *Oblate Assault*, 104.

<sup>23</sup> Grandin to Mazenod, 31 December 1860, *Oeuvres de Mgr. Grandin*. “Les ministres protestants nous poursuivent partout et parfois nous forcent, sinon à être plus zélés, au moins à entreprendre plus de missions que nous ferions autrement.”

conflict was seen in no uncertain terms as one of spiritual importance, with each organization seeing the doctrine of the other as no better than heathenism.<sup>24</sup>

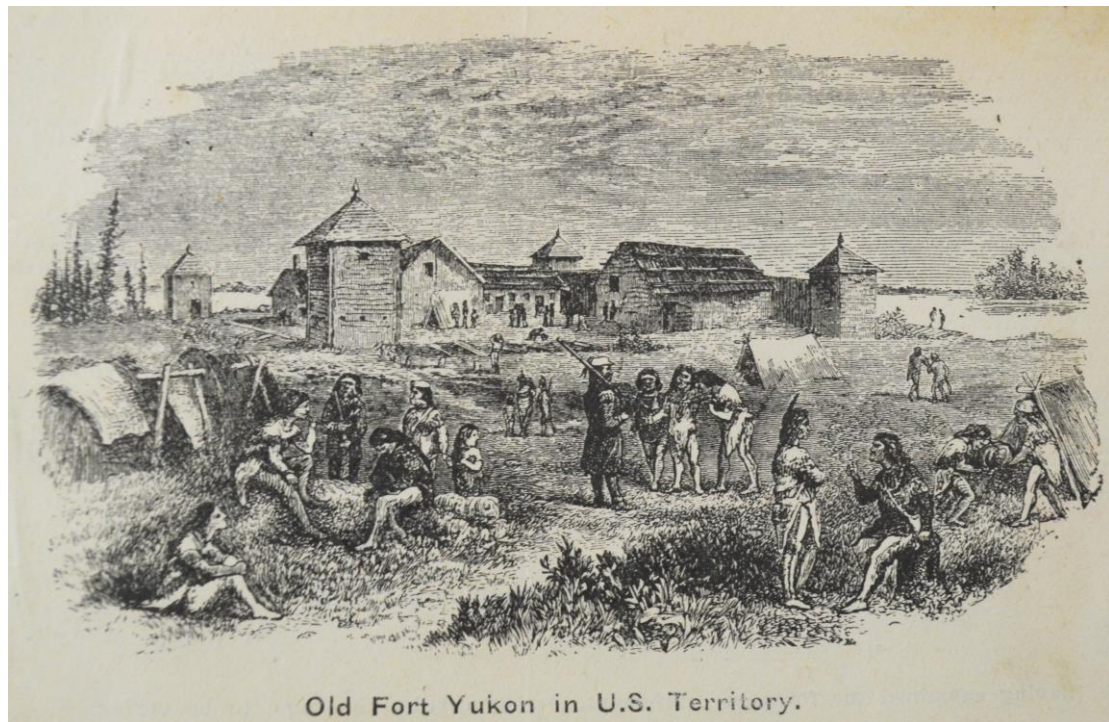
The HBC desired the two organizations to split the field, to avoid unnecessary confrontation and conflict. Many officers in the field saw the conflict causing significant difficulties and desired missionaries to remain apart and away.<sup>25</sup> Missionaries ignored this request and continued to attempt to outflank each other, at times preaching at the same posts at the same time, sometimes even travelling together. Both organizations also worked to send staff to posts the other had visited briefly. For example, Laverlochère, after Horden's establishment at Moose Factory, moved on to Fort Albany, erecting a cross and beginning a small mission house.<sup>26</sup> The CMS quickly responded, dispatching Thomas Vincent to the same post, where he also began to construct premises. The only check on their expansion was low staffing and individual HBC officers who sometimes refused missionaries admittance and sent them away.

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<sup>24</sup> Horden to Venn, 10 July 1857, CMSA-C/C1/O33/23.

<sup>25</sup> Nicol Taylor to Grollier, 13 February 1861, PAA-PR1971.0220-8098.

<sup>26</sup> Horden to Venn, 26 January 1852, CMSA-C/C1/O33/5.



3.9: Fort Yukon. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-390*

Many Oblates believed that the HBC was explicitly against them.<sup>27</sup> Although this was certainly true of some officers, the vast majority of whom were Protestant and favoured the CMS, it was not true of all, and the Oblates were welcomed at some posts; many, such as Émile Grouard, would go on to develop friendly relationships with HBC officers.<sup>28</sup> There can be no doubt, however, that some of the officers, particularly James Anderson and Bernard Ross, were virulently against them, displaying a deep anti-Catholic prejudice. This prejudice was often evident in the hospitality shown to competing missionaries when they arrived simultaneously, such as at Fort Yukon (fig. 3.9) where CMS missionary William West Kirkby was given room and board at the officer's house

<sup>27</sup> Grollier to Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1907.0220-202; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 35.

and Oblate Jean Séguin was lodged with the Company's engagés.<sup>29</sup> However, many of the officers wanted no missions at their posts at all, particularly in the far north where it was believed the presence of missionaries depleted their resources.<sup>30</sup>

The London Committee, on the other hand, continued to feel the public pressure to allow missionary operations and even saw some benefit in controlled missions.<sup>31</sup> Colvile, in particular, was willing to support both church building and religious instruction if executed in a controlled manner; he was also adamant that both organizations be treated equally in the field.<sup>32</sup> Colvile believed that indigenous people should and could be Christians, but also remain nomadic, suggesting that it made no difference if they became Catholic or Protestant.<sup>33</sup> However, he also believed that the CMS was unsuitable to conduct missions in both Athabasca and Mackenzie, because he saw the Oblates' vow of poverty as making them more adaptable to northern conditions. In an attempt to ensure fair treatment and the distribution of missionaries throughout the Mackenzie District, Colvile even offered Fort Good Hope to the Oblates, as a counterbalance to the CMS' mission at Fort Simpson.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jean Séguin to Henri Faraut, 20 October 1862, AD-GLPPC-29.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Gaudet to Ross, 7 February 1861, PAA-PR1971.0220-212.

<sup>31</sup> McCarthy, *Evangelize*, 40.

<sup>32</sup> Eden Colvile to Simpson, 14 July 1851, in *Inward Correspondence*, 225; Colvile to Ross, 20 October 1850, in *Inward Correspondence*, 38.

<sup>33</sup> Eden Colvile to Simpson, 14 July 1851, in *Inward Correspondence*, 226.

<sup>34</sup> Grollier to Faraut, 28 May 1862, PAA-PR1907.0220-8098.

As elsewhere, however, the HBC's real influence was in their ability to grant permission and give assistance for the erection of buildings. Grollier complained bitterly that Ross had granted assistance to the CMS to build a mission house at Fort Simpson but refused him the same courtesy, writing to Taché: "if he builds for the minister, he should also build for the priest."<sup>35</sup> Yet the HBC was indeed willing to assist in building for the priests, as at Fort Chipewyan, although Anderson only did so because he was ordered. The refusal to allow or assist with construction made establishing missions significantly more difficult, although, as was the case at Fort Resolution where Faraud was refused permission to build, aggressive negotiations with the HBC Committee generally led to permission being granted and, sometimes, orders for local officers to offer assistance.<sup>36</sup> The CMS generally did not face this impediment; although officers were often lukewarm about their presence, CMS missions were generally welcomed and granted assistance with building, sometimes to deny the Oblates the post.

This assistance was of particular importance because of the ability of structures to claim a post as an operational base and, by extension, access the indigenous people who traded there. Buildings provided a place for missionaries to meet indigenous people and from which to travel to other posts and indigenous camps in the local area. In regions where multiple missionary organizations were attempting to gain control of the field,

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<sup>35</sup> Grollier to Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1907.0220-202. "...si on bâtit pour le ministre, il faudrait aussi bâtit pour le prêtre."

<sup>36</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 40-42; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 54.

including in North America, building was generally regarded as the best strategy to achieve this.<sup>37</sup> Both the OMI and CMS also saw the erection of a structure as a marker of their right to occupy and control certain areas. Grollier was clear that the establishment of permanent stations was integral to staving off the CMS and believed in concentrating the Oblates' resources in order to do so.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the CMS' Thomas Hamilton Fleming suggested of the Catholic presence at Albany: "The merest log hut and somebody to live in it...would have been the necessary and only requisite to bar their coming this way."<sup>39</sup>

Yet Fleming's assertion that the log hut needed someone to live in it spoke to an issue facing both organizations: serious understaffing. Neither organization had enough staff to effectively cover the vast northern reaches of the continent; for example, in 1860, Kirkby was the only Protestant minister in the Mackenzie and Yukon Districts, completing a vast circuit of itineracy by himself stretching from the Lower Yukon River to Great Slave Lake. The Oblates, although better staffed, faced similar difficulties. This had a serious effect on the establishment of stations with neither enough people to construct or man stations.<sup>40</sup> This was a problem particularly faced by the CMS, alleviated to some degree by the willing assistance provided in construction by the HBC, because recruiting for the northern field proved extremely difficult.<sup>41</sup> The Oblates, while still

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<sup>37</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 168.

<sup>38</sup> Grollier to Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1907.0220-202.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Hamilton Fleming to Venn, 16 September 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O22/5.

<sup>40</sup> Mason to CMS, 20 September 1855, CMSA-C/C1/O42/3B.

<sup>41</sup> Ken Coates, "'Send Only Those Who Rise a Peg': Anglican Clergy in the Yukon, 1858-1932," *JCHS* 28, no. 1 (1986): 3-18.



**3.10:** York Factory, c.1915. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-21-149*

understaffed, were better equipped with the advantage of lay brothers who were dispatched to northern missions to complete tasks such as buildings and gardening.<sup>42</sup> Clutknew how vital the brothers were, particularly to ensure the missions' "material success...and assuring in an indirect manner the spiritual success of the Mission"<sup>43</sup> by allowing priests to focus on evangelization more effectively.

However, by the 1860s, the OMI and CMS had effectively split the field and were firmly entrenched in their respective stations.<sup>44</sup> Although continuing to compete against one another to expand through itineracy and the establishment of outstations, they had each established key missions throughout the Mackenzie, Moosonee and Athabasca Districts as focal points of their operations. On the Hudson-James Bay coast, the CMS had the most success. Despite the incursions of the OMI from Temiskaming, particularly at Albany, the CMS had established a permanent mission at York Factory (fig. 3.10) under Mason in 1854, erecting a mission in 1855; a church completed in 1858 (fig.

<sup>42</sup> Isidore Clut to Faraud, 29 December 1863, AD-GLPP-643.

<sup>43</sup> Clut to Florent Vandenbergh, 28 December 1864, AD-GLPP-757. "...son succès matériel ...et en Assurant d'une manière indirecte le succès spirituel de la Mission."

<sup>44</sup> Zaslow, *Canadian North*, 70.





**3.11:** St. John's Anglican Church, York Factory, c.1900-1915. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-21-149*

3.11), both built and paid for by the HBC under the orders of Chief Factor James Hargrave whose own view on the missionaries was decidedly mixed.<sup>45</sup> The CMS also sent missionary E.A. Watkins to Fort George on the eastern side of James Bay although a permanent station would not be established there until the 1880s. Fort Albany was also occupied in 1860 by Vincent, a “country-born”<sup>46</sup> minister of mixed ancestry from Red River, who immediately built a small house and moved into it; the Oblates’ house here was not permanently occupied.<sup>47</sup> After Horden’s arrival, the Oblates had little success on the Hudson Bay coast.

The Mackenzie, however, was a different matter. With Faraud’s arrival at Fort Chipewyan, Hunter, supported by Bishop Anderson, urged the CMS to move into the territory. Even before Anderson’s arrival, Hunter saw the Mackenzie as the logical and important next step for the CMS, but did not have the resources to expand.<sup>48</sup> Anderson, however, was obsessed with the Mackenzie due to a deep hatred of Catholicism and his support was complete and unconditional.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Helen E. Ross, “Introduction,” in *Letters from Rupert’s Land, 1826-1840: James Hargrave of the Hudson’s Bay Company* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 15-19.

<sup>46</sup> This is the term the CMS used for missionaries born in North America, but not of a pure indigenous ancestry, i.e. mixed-race missionaries. See: Kerry Abel, “Bishop Bompas and the Canadian Church,” in *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada*, ed. Barry Ferguson (Regina: University of Regina Press, 1991), 119.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Vincent to CMS, 14 February 1861, CMSA-C/C1/O70/27.

<sup>48</sup> Hunter to CMS, 31 July 1847; 3 August 1848, CMSA-C/C1/M4.

<sup>49</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 107.



**3.12:** Fort Resolution and Catholic Church, c.1888. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1992-29-62*

*When this photograph was taken, the original buildings had been replaced*

Hunter became concerned with the success of the Catholic mission at the Chipewyan and Faraud's expansion to Fort Resolution in 1852. James Anderson, now reassigned to Resolution, turned Faraud back, preventing him building a mission house; despite Anderson's initial suggestion that Resolution would be a better choice than Chipewyan for a permanent Catholic mission, this view changed when he found himself in charge of the more-northerly fort.<sup>50</sup> Yet negotiations with the HBC on the part of Taché allowed Faraud to return in 1856; he built a small house, solidifying the Catholic presence

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<sup>50</sup> James Anderson to Colvile, 16 March 1852, LAC-MG19-A29.1-1.

there.<sup>51</sup> In 1856, Fathers Grollier and Germain Eynard along with lay brother Jean Perréard arrived, with the assumption that Resolution would be a base for expansion on Great Slave Lake (fig. 3.12).<sup>52</sup>

The mission at Fort Resolution was deeply concerning to the CMS, particularly Hunter and Bishop Anderson who saw it as the first step towards Catholic dominance in the Mackenzie.<sup>53</sup> With Anderson's support, Hunter petitioned the CMS in 1857 for permission to conduct an exploratory mission into the Mackenzie District, in order to outflank the Oblates and "take possession of Fort Simpson",<sup>54</sup> its main depot. His goal was not to establish a new permanent station himself, but rather determine the most advantageous location for one. He saw the need for haste, writing to the CMS: "After the Priests have settled and secured the Indians and the best spots for Mission Stations, it will be very difficult especially in this thinly populated country, to follow."<sup>55</sup> His request given ascent, Hunter set off with the Mackenzie brigade to Fort Simpson in the summer of 1858 after negotiating with Simpson for transport and lodging.<sup>56</sup> He was not, however, alone. Upon reaching Fort Resolution, he was joined by Grollier who wanted to prevent the CMS from gaining such an important post. Grollier and Hunter travelled together to

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<sup>51</sup> "Missions de la Rivière Rouge," *Missions* 1 (1862): 51.

<sup>52</sup> Carrière, "Fondation," 406; "Vingt Années des missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique," *Missions* 5 (1866): 182

<sup>53</sup> Anderson to Venn, 9 November 1857, CMSA-C/C1/O2E/1/65.

<sup>54</sup> Hunter to Venn, 4 November 1857, CMSA-C/C1/O35/52.

<sup>55</sup> Hunter to Chapman, 9 April 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/54.

<sup>56</sup> Peake, "Hunter," 155.



**3.13:** Anglican Mission, Fort Simpson, c.1889. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 199-29-83*

Fort Simpson, where Hunter was welcomed by Ross, and Grollier was sent back to Fort Resolution.

Before returning south in 1859, Hunter concluded that the CMS should establish a mission at Fort Simpson (fig. 3.13), and, when funds and staff permitted, expand to Forts Liard and Good Hope, then north to the Arctic. Almost immediately upon his arrival, he began to erect a mission house, making arrangements for it to be completed by the

HBCfor when his successor arrived.<sup>57</sup>That successor, Kirkby, arrived in summer 1859, and the mission house was completed soon after. He was soon joined by schoolmaster John Hope, an indigenous convert baptised by West. No other CMS missionary was dispatched until 1862, when Robert McDonald, a “country-born” missionary from Red River, was stationed permanently at Fort Yukon. Kirkby saw Fort Yukon as an important post due to its location and access to Peel River Fort (Fort McPherson) and Lapierre’s House and his positive impression of the Gwich’in amongst whom he believed there was a favourable level of success for the CMS.<sup>58</sup>The Oblates were also looking eagerly to this region and it was for that reason that McDonald was dispatched. Building there was delayed due to uncertainty over the region’s political situation; the post was abandoned in 1870 following the Alaska Purchase. McDonald also saw no need to erect residential buildings as his work included significant itineracy and he was comfortably lodged by the HBC.<sup>59</sup>By 1865, Kirkby, Hope and McDonald were the only CMS personnel in the district, occupying stations only at Forts Simpson and Yukon.

The Oblates were not idle. Taché recognized the need for a more northerly site and, in 1859, dispatched Grollier to Fort Good Hope (fig. 3.14).A house was constructed for him by the HBC, at Colville’s request. From there, Grollier travelled aggressively throughout

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<sup>57</sup> Hunter to David Anderson, 29 November 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/59.

<sup>58</sup> Frank Peake, “William West Kirkby: Missionary From Alaska to Florida,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 34, no. 3 (1965): 247-48; Robert McDonald to Venn, 20 August 1862, CMSA-C/C1/O45/2.

<sup>59</sup> McDonald to Venn, 17 October 1862, CMSA-C/C1/O45/3.



**3.14:** Catholic Mission, Fort Good Hope. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-203*

the Mackenzie District, visiting posts including Forts Rae, Norman, and Peel River.

Grolier saw the region around Peel River as vital for gaining the far north, and made this a priority in his travels.<sup>60</sup> He was joined in 1861 by Séguin and brother Joseph Kearney, who rebuilt the house.<sup>61</sup> Grolier was in ill-health and died in 1864; Séguin took over his northern work, but Catholic influence north of Fort Good Hope remained limited.

Simultaneously, the Oblates were also at work in the southern part of the Mackenzie District. Taché believed that the northern missions would be best served by the creation

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<sup>60</sup> Grolier to Taché, 18 July 1861, PAA-PR1971.0220-8099.

<sup>61</sup> Séguin to Antoine Mouchette, 20 July 1862, *Missions* 5 (1866): 244.

of a northern bishopric; Grollier and Faraud agreed, believing that the authority of the episcopal position would gain the respect of the Dene.<sup>62</sup> While Taché worked to secure approval for the division of the diocese and the elevation of Faraud as its bishop, Grandin travelled north to take stock of the missions and, crucially, to establish an episcopal seat.

Believing that the site needed to be both central and with good potential for transport and self-sufficiency, Grandin chose a site at the Rapids of the Mackenzie, recommended by both Grollier and the HBC, although ironically, the HBC had initially suggested this site to the CMS as a way of keeping them at a distance from Fort Simpson.<sup>63</sup> There was no HBC post here which made the choice highly unusual. But this also made it attractive because it gave Grandin the opportunity to establish a distinctly Christian space, clearly differentiated from the HBC.<sup>64</sup> Grandin believed that indigenous people travelling between posts would visit the mission; it was an assertion that turned out to be correct and the HBC eventually moved the nearby post at Big Island to the mission because of its attraction for the Dene. Grandin justified his choice in his journal, writing that it was “a place where there is always a good fishery, the soil is arable and where there is no

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<sup>62</sup> Martha McCarthy, “The Founding of the Providence Mission,” *Western Oblate Studies* 1 (1990): 42.

<sup>63</sup> McCarthy, “Providence Mission,” 45.

<sup>64</sup> “Rapport sur l’année 1865,” *Missions* 6 (1867): 357.





3.15: Providence Mission, n.d. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-250-N008*

lack of wood for building.”<sup>65</sup> He named it Providence Mission “because it will be, in reality, the Providence of the North.”<sup>66</sup>

Grandin immediately planted a cross and, with assistance from Eynard and Brother Louis Boisramé, erected two small houses, one of which served as a chapel.<sup>67</sup> By November 1862, they were usable if not complete.<sup>68</sup> Grandin was joined by Émile Grouard in 1863, who commented that “the house in which we lived left nothing to be desired in regard

<sup>65</sup> Grandin Journal, 26 August 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 223. “une place où il y a toujours une bonne pêche, où la terre est cultivable et où on ne manque pas de bois pour bâtir.”

<sup>66</sup> Grandin Journal, 26 August 1861, 224. “car ce sera, dans la réalité, la Providence du Nord.”

<sup>67</sup> Zéphérin Gascon to Faraud, 20 October 1861, AD-GLPPC-12; Petitot to Faraud, September 1863, *Missions* 6 (1867): 365; “Vingt Années,” 258.

<sup>68</sup> Grandin Journal, 10 November 1862, *Missions* 5 (1866): 257-58.

to poverty”,<sup>69</sup> giving a good impression of the size and quality of most early mission buildings. Soon after, Grandin began to erect a convent for the Grey Nuns who he hoped to bring north to serve the Mackenzie District. When completed in 1864, it stood two stories high and measured 45 by 25 feet, making it the largest ecclesiastical building in the Mackenzie and also reflecting Providence’s role as the episcopal seat and new centre of the Oblates’ northern missions (fig. 3.15).<sup>70</sup>

### *Principle Stations and Mission Networks*

By the end of the 1860s, the two groups of missionaries had achieved relatively little, despite the relentless push to establish mission stations throughout the north. However, the missions established in this initial period were extremely important for future growth serving as centres of influence where missionaries could base their work and expand. In their rivalry, the creation of mission stations entrenched both organizations within the landscape as physical and ideological alternatives to both indigenous life and each other. However, with limited resources, success hinged on the ability of missionaries to maximize the impact of a minimum number of staff throughout a

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<sup>69</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 64. “La maison que nous habitons ne laissait rien à désirer, sous le rapport de la pauvreté.”

<sup>70</sup> Grandin Journal, 13 July 1864, *Missions* 5 (1866): 401.

massive geographic region. This was achieved, by both organizations, through what Horden characterized as “principle stations.”<sup>71</sup>

“Principle stations” were key stations on which both missionary organizations focussed their resources and served an array of purposes on both regional and local levels.

Missionaries regarded these stations as the primary sites of Christian influence in non-Christian territories. Architecturally, the permanent establishment of a station meant putting up a building, generally a house, to mark their claim and create a material presence. This building was also a base for expansion to push the missionary frontier further towards the Arctic, until they could eventually go no further. Taché characterized Fort Chipewyan as the jumping-off point for the occupation of the Mackenzie, with the belief that, from this station, the Oblates would be able to push north through a combination of itinerate mission and the establishment of new stations with the ability to fall back to a strong established base, if necessary.<sup>72</sup> Moose Factory was viewed by the CMS in much the same way. Principal missions were also viewed as administrative centres from which temporal benefits, such as supplies, and spiritual benefits, like Christian teaching, could flow.<sup>73</sup> As both organizations pushed forward throughout the 1850s and 1860s, each successive station became the next step from which they could jump until, as both Grollier and Kirkby did, they reached the Arctic

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<sup>71</sup>Horden to Venn, 21 January 1861, CMSA-C/C1/O33/107.

<sup>72</sup>Taché, *Notes*, 1.

<sup>73</sup>Nicholas M. Creary, *Domesticating a Religious Import: The Jesuits and the Inculturation of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, 1879-1980* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 35.

Ocean, creating a fluid network of missions, simultaneously expanding and consolidating as missionary influence grew.<sup>74</sup> The goal, as articulated by Hunter was to build “a chain of flourishing stations”<sup>75</sup> from which the entire territory could be Christianized and civilized.<sup>76</sup>

The importance of the station as a base for itineracy cannot be underestimated. Despite the desire to convert, civilize and settle indigenous people, this was simply not realistic, especially during initial expansion. The role of missions such as Fort Chipewyan and Moose Factory as bases for wide-ranging itineracy was consistently acknowledged and emphasized because missionaries knew that itineracy was a vital way to reach indigenous people and introduce Christianity. There was also concern that if converts went too long without seeing a priest or minister, they would abandon Christianity and itineracy provided an effective way of reinforcing teaching and ensuring faith.<sup>77</sup> For example, itineracy was McDonald’s primary occupation; Fort Yukon served primarily as a base, although he also preached and held school when he was there.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, when Bompas arrived at Fort Simpson at Christmas 1865, he was assigned a massive itinerate circuit, and no permanent post. The environment itself and the lifestyle of its people made this vital because of the seasonal patterns of hunting and trading within a large,

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<sup>74</sup> Ricard, *Spiritual Conquest*, 78.

<sup>75</sup> Hunter to CMS, 31 July 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/57.

<sup>76</sup> The idea of chains of station in controlling territory is not limited to North America. See, for example, Strayer, *Mission Communities*, 30-32.

<sup>77</sup> Clut to Joseph Fabre, 16 December 1861, AD-GLPP-633.

<sup>78</sup> McDonald to Venn, 31 January 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O45/7.

sparsely-populated territory; although the HBC post was an important point of contact and mediation, there were indigenous groups who visited these locations, rarely, if ever, and the expectation that a missionary could stay at the station and wait for potential converts was unrealistic. “Principle” stations enabled missionaries to more effectively itinerate by establishing a network of routes centred on strategic locations.<sup>79</sup>

As sites of Christian influence and bases for outreach and expansion, these stations were regarded as places from which entire regions could be held. Horden spoke of these stations as gateways to regional districts, strategic for expansion and for excluding their rivals.<sup>80</sup> He saw Moose Factory as the northern gateway to the Moosenee district because of the role of the post within the HBC network. He was concerned, however, that the posts he viewed as the southern gateways—Temiskaming and Michipicoten—were under the control of the Oblates and could be used to take control of the district. He was likewise concerned that Laverlochère’s construction activities at Albany “would give them a key to a large extent of the country.”<sup>81</sup> On the other side of the continent, Grollier expressed a similar concern over Kirkby’s visit to Fort Yukon, pressuring Faraud to establish immediately at the Alaskan post because of its importance in accessing the Arctic coast and Lower Yukon River. He wrote that for the OMI’s success: “The essential

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<sup>79</sup> Bompas to CMS, November 1870, CMSA-C/C1/O10/36.

<sup>80</sup> Horden to Wright, 4 October 1875, CMSA-C/C1/O2D/13.

<sup>81</sup> Horden to Venn, 26 January 1852, CMSA-C/C1/O33/5.

thing, therefore, for the moment, is to establish at [Fort] Yukon and we will save the entire extremity of the north.”<sup>82</sup>

The use of the principal mission as a key part of missionary expansion was not limited to North America, nor did it only occur in practice. This strategy had been articulated in an 1857 article in the *Intelligencer*, entitled “Missionary Centres” which asserted that, as well as being a spiritual enterprise, “missionary work is a great strategic operation”<sup>83</sup> particularly in the establishment of missionary stations. It recognized that the extension of the gospel required careful planning in the development of key sites where missionary influence could be established, consolidated and spread on a global, local and regional scale. The article recommended that stations be established which had a “central and influential character”<sup>84</sup> and could act as a nexus of activities from which the missionary could “advance to further conquests.”<sup>85</sup> Like Taché’s strategic view of Fort Chipewyan, the “missionary centre” presented in the *Intelligencer* was a stronghold from which expansion into unclaimed and un-evangelized territory could begin, something that was strategically prudent and, it argued, in the manner of the early church.<sup>86</sup> These centres were both global and local, connecting a widespread hinterland with central nodes of development, Fort Simpson or Fort Chipewyan for example, which they

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<sup>82</sup> Grollier to Faraut, 28 May 1862, PAA-PR1971.0220-8098. “L’essential a donc pour le moment est d’établir Youcon et nous sauverons toute l’extrémité Nord.”

<sup>83</sup> “Missionary Centres,” *CMI* 8 (1857): 25.

<sup>84</sup> “Missionary Centres,” 48.

<sup>85</sup> “Missionary Centres,” 25.

<sup>86</sup> “Missionary Centres,” 25.

themselves were subsumed into the wider networks of mission centred on London and Rome.<sup>87</sup>

This idea was actively adopted in the development of mission networks throughout northern Canada where both Fort Simpson and Moose Factory served in this capacity in their respective districts, as “commanding points” where Kirkby and Horden could gain a foothold and look to expansion. Indeed, Fleming called Moose Factory “the headquarters of the Missionary as Antioch of old,”<sup>88</sup> and emphasized the importance of the station for expansion, as Antioch was for the early church; by the time Fleming arrived at Moose Factory in 1857, the station itself was also largely Christian and much of the actual work of evangelization was shifting to outlying stations. Fort Simpson was established with the same function in mind, with Hunter asserting that: “from there, we will branch out throughout that important District.”<sup>89</sup>

Although the article was Protestant in its focus, the Oblates also approached the development of stations as a strategic exercise, viewing the missions at Resolution, Good Hope, Providence and Chipewyanas centres from which to expand and around which networks of missions could be established.<sup>90</sup> The notion of missionary centre with corresponding outposts was something that was consistently discussed in

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<sup>87</sup> Lambert and Lester, “Imperial Spaces,” 10.

<sup>88</sup> Fleming to Venn, 24 August 1857, CMSA-C/C1/O22/1.

<sup>89</sup> Hunter to Venn, 20 June 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/56.

<sup>90</sup> Huel, “Mission Strategy,” 241-42; Champagne, *Vital Grandin*, 97.

correspondence, particularly during the early years of expansion.<sup>91</sup> Grandin certainly saw Providence in this light, which he described as “the centre of our Missions in this part of the North”<sup>92</sup> stating that the priests and brothers “could live there in a community...and serve the Missions”<sup>93</sup> at Fort Rae, Big Island, Fort Simpson and Fort Liard. Because of this function, Grandin viewed the establishment of Providence as more urgent than expansion elsewhere, despite more favourable circumstances in other places, such as at Fort Liard where the Oblates had met with some success at a well-established post. Its role was both to strengthen and feed the development of the network of Catholic missions throughout the Mackenzie District and the emphasis on the rapid erection of permanent infrastructure consolidated its position as such. Consequently, Grandin saw it as the most important mission within his charge, particularly when compared to its nearby Anglican counterpart at Fort Simpson.<sup>94</sup> Other missionaries were also keenly aware of Providence’s function as a central nexus of the northern missions.<sup>95</sup> Petitot, who joined Grandin briefly at Providence in summer 1862, described it as “a new mission which will become the metropolis of the far north of

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<sup>91</sup> Clut to Vandenberghe, 28 December 1866, AD-GLPP-757; Petitot to Faraud, 30 June 1878, AD-GLPPC-32; Faraud to Mazenod, 29 December 1855, AD-GLPP-1614.

<sup>92</sup> Grandin Journal, 26 August 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 223. “...le centre de nos Missions de cette partie du Nord.”

<sup>93</sup> Grandin Journal, 26 August 1861, 224. “...nous pourrions y vivre en communauté...et desservir les Missions...”

<sup>94</sup> McCarthy, “Providence Mission,” 46.

<sup>95</sup> Clut to Faraud, 15 February 1869, AD-GLPP-673.



America, like Saint-Boniface is for Red River”<sup>96</sup> recognizing its future role in the growth of Catholic missions throughout the north.

Providence’s importance, however, extended beyond its location because of its role as the episcopal seat for the Apostolic Vicariate of Athabasca-Mackenzie, created in 1862 with Faraud as its Vicar Apostolic. It should be noted that, despite this intention, neither Faraud, nor his auxiliary, Clut, made their long-term seat there as Faraud preferred to live at Lac la Biche and Clut spent the majority of his time itinerating.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, the erection of the station was intimately tied to the creation of the northern vicariate and the importance of the appointment of its first bishop.

Faraud and Grollier had directly asked for a bishop for the region, believing that a separate bishop would prove administratively helpful but also vital in regards to the expansion of mission through the imbedded power of the episcopacy.<sup>98</sup> The need for authority was both spiritual and political; on one hand, they believed that a bishop would counteract the CMS, whose highest-ranking clergy in the north was Kirkby, an archdeacon, while on the other, they believed that the authority of a bishop would garner a greater degree of negotiating power with the HBC.<sup>99</sup> This desire also

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<sup>96</sup> Petitot to Fabre, 31 August 1862, *Missions* 2 (1863): 229. “...une nouvelle Mission qui deviendra la métropole de l’extrême nord-Amérique comme Saint-Boniface l’est de la Rivière-Rouge.”

<sup>97</sup> Choquette, *Oblate Assault*, 59; 69.

<sup>98</sup> Grollier to Faraud, 9 September 1861, PAA-PR1971.0220-8098.

<sup>99</sup> McCarthy, “Providence,” 42-43; Raymond Huel, *Archbishop A.-A. Taché of Saint-Boniface: The “Good Fight” and the Illusive Vision* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2003), 76.

corresponded to the importance of the episcopal office in ultramontane Catholicism, providing a hierarchical link to the universal church and the ultimate authority of the Bishop of Rome. The importance of bishops in the west as an integral aspect of expansion can be seen even in their earliest days, with Provencher's rapid elevation to the episcopacy in 1822. In particular, it reinforced the fact that the Oblates did not recognize secular powers as a hindrance to expansion, something which guided them throughout their missions.<sup>100</sup>

For the Oblates, the re-creation of the episcopal hierarchy was a vital part of the transmission of Catholicism.<sup>101</sup> The episcopal seat was the centre from which authority and ideas flowed, functions which occurred both through the bishop's presence and the institutions located there. In Grandin's view, a primary focus was education with the eventual erection of a convent-school to serve the entire region as a residential facility.<sup>102</sup> Providence also provided an administrative centre. Therefore, its role as a central mission from which a subsequent network of stations could spread throughout the region was enhanced by its function as the northern episcopal seat.

By establishing the site at Providence, the Oblates also effectively staked a claim to the entire territory, by bringing the Mackenzie under the territorial jurisdiction of a bishop;

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<sup>100</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 41.

<sup>101</sup> McCarthy, "Theory," 68.

<sup>102</sup> Grandin to Faraud, 20 March 1863, AD-GLPPC-39; Clut to Faraud, 15 February 1869, AD-GLPP-673.

although Faraud was only a titular bishop, he was the Vicar Apostolic of a real, physical space and, as such, marked a very clear step by the Oblates to take possession of the territory. It was certainly seen in this light by the CMS, and it was intended to. The vicariate was strongly associated with the land, with Grollier remarking that it was his desire to see “a Bishop-King for this immense kingdom of the Great River”<sup>103</sup>, expressing a relationship between the position, its power and the land on which it rested that was spiritual as well as physical.<sup>104</sup>

Grandin also saw his role in preparing the way for the new Vicar Apostolic as claiming the land to enable to episcopal seat to be established. Part of this involved creating a space divorced from the HBC, reflecting the Church’s role as a spiritual authority separate from commercial enterprise.<sup>105</sup> Its site away from any HBC post reinforced this as well as removing any limitations on growth put in place by the Company. While the designation of the territory as an Apostolic Vicariate allowed the Catholic church, through the OMI, to claim the larger Athabasca-Mackenzie region as under their control, Grandin secured the physical space where that authority would rest; Grandin’s language alludes to the idea of custody and control on the land, as he says he “took possession of

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<sup>103</sup> Grollier to Valentin Vegreville, 19 February 1859, LAC-M-2050. “...un évêque-roi pour cet immense royaume de la Grand Rivière.”

<sup>104</sup> McCarthy, “Providence,” 42.

<sup>105</sup> Grandin Journal, 19 July 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 221; “Rapport sur l’année 1865,” *Missions* 6 (1867): 357.



**3.16:**Cross, Fort Good Hope. *Author's photo*

*This cross is not original, but shows how the crosses Oblates missionaries would have erected appeared in the northern landscape.*

the place”<sup>106</sup> for the immediate purpose of construction and also for the Church as a larger spiritual entity.

Grandin took physical control of the land by planting a cross, surveying the site and placing stakes at its boundaries. The immediate survey was a clear indication of the Oblates’ commitment to the site and, by extension, the north as a mission field. It also defined Providence as explicitly Catholic space, as did the erection of the cross, a longstanding practice in Catholic missions (fig. 3.16) that had risen to prominence during

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<sup>106</sup> Grandin Journal, 26 August 1861, 224. “...je prenais possession de la place.”

the seventeenth century in French foreign and domestic missions to denote territorial possession and the arrival of Catholicism in non-Christian lands.<sup>107</sup> They were also used to mark spiritual territorial boundaries between Catholic and Protestant lands, as a material representation of the Catholic frontier.<sup>108</sup> This strategy was also employed in northern Canada where a planted cross was viewed as “that triumphant sign”<sup>109</sup> that Catholic missions had claimed a post as their mission territory.<sup>110</sup> Crosses were planted at locations where missions were to be established as well as at camps which the priests had visited, but where there was no intention of a permanent mission, including at a number of Dene camps around Great Bear Lake.<sup>111</sup> It was clearly understood that cross planting designated the integration of the area and its people into the universal Catholic Church and marked the Christian frontier where the church had penetrated the wilderness. The phrase “planting the cross” was also used metaphorically to denote the pushing of the Christian frontier through the establishment of new missions, including by the CMS which did not physically erect crosses.<sup>112</sup> After planting a cross in the Arctic, Grollier wrote that “the Cross became a hyphen between myself, children from the

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<sup>107</sup> Amanda Eurich, “Sacralising Space: Reclaiming Civic Culture in Early Modern France,” in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 276; Seed, *Ceremonies*, 41-44.

<sup>108</sup> Louis Châtellier, *The Religion of the Poor: Rural Missions in Europe and the Foundation of Modern Catholicism, c.1500-1800*, trans. Brian Pearce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 108-9.

<sup>109</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 207. “...ce signe triumpant...”

<sup>110</sup> Taché, *Vingt Années*, 120-21.

<sup>111</sup> Petitot to Faraud, 1 June 1864, AD-GLPPC-25.

<sup>112</sup> Petitot to Faraud, 20 April 1867, AD-GLPPC-25; Hunter to Venn, 4 November 1857, CMSA-C/C1/O35/52.

Mediterranean shores and the inhabitants of the icy shores of the Polar Sea,”<sup>113</sup> secure in his belief that the cross was a clear symbol of the connected global community of the church, from the heart of Catholicism to the edge of the world.

However, at Providence, the planting of the cross also demarcated the future site of the episcopal seat and the CMS viewed its development with concern, despite its own ambiguous relationship with the episcopal role in mission.<sup>114</sup> Although supporting the episcopacy and its eventual spread into their mission fields, the CMS did not see the need for bishops in initial missionary expansion. The organization often saw bishops as a hindrance to its work, because the CMS wanted to retain autonomy and control over its own operations.<sup>115</sup> Bishops were to follow evangelization, when missions were well-established and needed structure and administration.<sup>116</sup> The dispatch of Anderson, although hailed as important step for the growth of the missions, was one that the Society viewed with seriousness, ensuring that someone was appointed who was sympathetic with their aims. It was also made clear to Anderson that the Society would retain control over mission development and strategy.<sup>117</sup> The CMS’ official view on the relationship between bishops and physical territory was also more ambiguous, especially

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<sup>113</sup> Grollier to Baveux, 14 September 1860, *Rapport de la Propagation de la Foi de la Diocèse de Montréal* 13 (1861) : 41. “la Croix est devenue un trait d’union entre moi, les enfants des rivages méditerranéens et les habitants des rivages glacés de la mer polaire.”

<sup>114</sup> Hunter Journal, 3 November 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/114; Gascon to Faraut, 20 October 1861, AD-GLPPC-12.

<sup>115</sup> Cnattingius, *Bishops*, 222-23.

<sup>116</sup> Yates, *Victorian Bishops*, 93-94; 105.

<sup>117</sup> Den Otter, “Anderson,” 82; Peake, “Personnel,” 63.

in Venn's advocacy for non-territorial bishops to oversee indigenous Christians in areas where there were also settler churches.<sup>118</sup> Issues around the role of the episcopacy were lessened in the subsequent creation of northern dioceses where the CMS drew from their own ranks, raising missionaries already in the field to oversee regions comprised entirely of CMS missions. They effectively filled the role of missionary bishop, an idea within the Church of England where bishops could function as missionary-in-chief to spread the gospel into yet-unevangelized territory, an idea that Venn did not agree with because of the CMS' views on the natural development of ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>119</sup> However, in such a large and remote region with limited access to external support, these bishops provided important administrative and episcopal functions in order to consolidate and grow the northern mission.

However, the CMS also saw the appeal in the creation of territorial networks based on local episcopal authority. Initial advocacy for the appointment of a Bishop of Rupert's Land stemmed from the desire to strengthen missions through increased localised support within a defined territorial space and, by the 1860s, some missionaries were beginning to have this discussion again. Horden, for example, advocated for the creation of a bishopric of Moosonee, because of the distance between Moose Factory and "the

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<sup>118</sup> Williams, "Not Transplanting," 168.

<sup>119</sup> Timothy Yates, "The Idea of a 'Missionary Bishop' in the Spread of the Anglican Communion in the Nineteenth-Century," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 2, no. 1(2004): 54-55.

heart of the system”<sup>120</sup>, Red River, which lessened the station’s influence due to a lack of local authority. Two new dioceses, Moosonee under Horden and Athabasca under Bompas, were created in 1872 and 1874 respectively, with Moose Factory and Fort Simpson as their episcopal seats, placing territorial authority within regional centres. The creation of both Protestant and Catholic episcopal centres, manifested physically through the erection of buildings, shifted authority to control land and enact transformation inside the budding network of northern missions, developing power structures based in European precedent to secure territory and Christianize the land.

#### *Civilization in the Far North*

The growth and creation of mission stations played an integral role in the conflict for territory and the evangelism of indigenous people. This growth and development was intimately entwined with the creation of contact space where the indigenous and European worlds could meet and where taking possession of the land was intimately the transformation of landscape and, by extension, the lives of indigenous people.<sup>121</sup> The missionaries’ claim to the land was intended to mark a shift in its existence from non-Christian wilderness to Christian garden.

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<sup>120</sup> Horden to Venn, 7 September 1868, CMSA-C/C1/O33/58.

<sup>121</sup> Habel, *Land*, 63.



The establishment of core stations with an eye to expansion began the gradual shift of control over the land from the indigenous past to the Christian future by establishing Christian space. The idea that land could be appropriated in both a physical and spiritual sense through place-making allowed for mission stations to function as a way to take possession of the land through the construction of buildings.<sup>122</sup> For missionaries in North America, this was particularly poignant because of the widespread belief that land occupied by nomadic communities was actually not occupied at all, and thus could easily be possessed through physical, permanent occupation in the form of buildings. This idea, globally applied by both missionaries and secular authorities, was most strongly emphasized in regions, such as Africa, where the historical and cultural associations of the landscape derived primarily from oral history, which missionaries viewed an invalid way to claim historic rights to a region, particularly because these narratives had few elements related to subduing the environment, as articulated in Genesis 1:26-28.<sup>123</sup> In the far north, where agricultural settlement was an extremely difficult way of transforming a vast and difficult landscape, these ideas were pushed to the extreme as missionaries attempted to ensure the Christian possession of indigenous land.

These mission stations were, in Bishop Anderson's words, "a bright light"<sup>124</sup> in the wilderness. Separated by vast tracts of wilderness, the Christianized space of the mission

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<sup>122</sup> Mackenzie, "Missionaries," 113.

<sup>123</sup> Ranger "Taking Hold," 161.

<sup>124</sup> Anderson to Venn, 9 August 1850, CMSA-C/C1/O2E/1/9.

station provided an environment distinctive from the surrounding landscape where Christian beliefs were dominant.<sup>125</sup> Here, missionaries could meet indigenous people and transmit their message, creating a space of encounter that represented very tangibly missionaries' incursions into indigenous space. Missionaries assumed that the gradual conversion of indigenous people, through the encounters at the mission, would forge a new understanding of landscape amongst them and change fundamentally the activities they pursued within it. Until the land and its people were fully Christianized and transformed, mission stations provided both a site of encounter and a mark of possession within the territory, a clear indication of the desire to take hold of and change its physical and spiritual characteristics.

The relative success of the agricultural model in the creation of settled communities, both at Red River and other locations, such as the Methodist missions in Upper Canada, suggested that it was a clear and effective strategy for transforming landscape and its inhabitants.<sup>126</sup> Bishop Anderson, for example, founded his mission strategy on this assumption, envisaging a time when the entire country, including the north, would be arranged in Christian villages and under controlled cultivation, although this was at odds with the general, romanticised understanding of the northern environment.<sup>127</sup> However, during the initial expansion of missions in the 1850s and 1860s, it became abundantly

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<sup>125</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 7; Morgan, "Encounters," 55-57.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Ripmeester, "'It is Scarcely to be Believed': The Mississauga Indians and the Grape Island Mission, 1826-1836," *Canadian Geographer* 39, no. 2 (1995): 157-68.

<sup>127</sup> Den Otter, "Anderson," 93.

apparent that the creation of agricultural settlements in the north was not realistic.

Although missionaries generally believed the north to be a barren, icy wasteland, at the same time, they arrived there with the expectation that they could create agricultural communities. There was a clear disconnect between their expectations of the environmental conditions of the territory and what they believed could be achieved with regard to farming, and this was not acknowledged. The reality was that the varying climate and landscape across the territory made limited cultivation possible in some areas and not in others.

After six years at Moose Factory, Horden was convinced that agricultural settlement there was not realistic because of the local climate and short growing season as, with the exception of some potatoes, his attempts to grow crops there had failed.<sup>128</sup> In 1857, he wrote to the Venn, stating: "It would indeed be a happy sight to see them assembled in a large village...but I do not think it practical and we must be content to find them growing in grace although living in their nomadic state."<sup>129</sup> Horden recognized what many missionaries in the north, both Protestant and Catholic, would recognize in subsequent years: that conversion and civilization, although ideally developed in tandem, were not necessarily complementary in the northern environment because stations such as his could not support agriculture or settlement. Horden even went so

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<sup>128</sup> Horden to Strath, 27 January 1852, CMSA-C/C1/O33/6A; Horden to Mie, 11 February 1869, CMSA-C/C1/O33/61.

<sup>129</sup> Horden to Venn, 10 July 1857, CMSA-C/C1/O33/23.

far as to recognize that the bounty of the wilderness—fish and game—was “provided them [indigenous people] by the Heavenly Father”<sup>130</sup> as their only sustainable means of subsistence. The nomadic Christian, however, was still seen as inferior to the settled one because of the inherent connections in the missionary psyche between Christian belief and settled communities.<sup>131</sup>

The reality of settlement in the far north was brought to the fore at the 1857 Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry into the Hudson’s Bay Company’s charter renewal where the issue as to whether or not the HBC was doing enough to convert and civilize indigenous people became a central issue.<sup>132</sup> The Committee approached this issue with the broad understanding that it was the mandate of empire and its agents to assist in the improvement of indigenous people through conversion, civilization and settlement; their intention was to establish whether or not the HBC’s territory was suitable for settlement and, with regard to the far north, they received conflicting reports. From both Simpson and John Richardson, who had accompanied Franklin on his overland expeditions, the answer was a resounding no, with Richardson even suggesting that indigenous people did not want to be settled.<sup>133</sup> They were contradicted by the Aborigines Protection Society, which had little understanding of the northern environment, and argued for settlement schemes similar to those occurring in the

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<sup>130</sup> Horden to Venn, 20 January 1857, CMSA-C/C1/O33/104.

<sup>131</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 122-23.

<sup>132</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 194.

<sup>133</sup> *Select Committee* (1857), 157.

United States, seeing indigenous people out on the land as a clear indication that the HBC was not fulfilling its imperial duty.<sup>134</sup>

Bishop Anderson was also asked to testify and his responses shed light onto the dilemma being faced by northern missionaries. Anderson was dedicated to the idea of civilization but, in his testimony, was forced to admit that “Indian settlement...is not possible at Moose on James Bay and not possible at York on Hudson’s Bay”,<sup>135</sup> a stunning admission for someone who had always maintained the dichotomy between Christian civilization and wilderness and the ability to transform the latter through missions. Nevertheless, Anderson insisted that civilization of the land and its people was possible in some places. He also asserted that Christianity alone was “improving” indigenous communities, even without accompanying settlement.<sup>136</sup> Despite this, Anderson continued to assert that northern people and landscape could be redeemed, regardless of his clear understanding that this was an unsuitable strategy.

Other missionaries were similarly uncomfortable making this admission and had difficulty reconciling environmental conditions with their belief that nomadic hunting was un-Christian. Some, like John Mackay at Fort Vermillion, recognized that agricultural

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<sup>134</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 203.

<sup>135</sup> *Select Committee* (1857), 235.

<sup>136</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 220.

settlements were not tenable at far northern missions.<sup>137</sup> Others, like Bompas blamed indigenous people for a lack of initiative, convinced that Christian people could transform any landscape, because Christian civilization, in his view, could not exist in nomadic communities.<sup>138</sup> Some, including Horden, more cautiously combined their knowledge that agriculture and settlement were not possible in some places with a hope that it might be in others. Horden posited that while settlement and agriculture were not possible at Moose Factory, they might be attempted elsewhere in the Moosonee region; more southerly outstations, such as Flying Post or Brunswick House, could support stations and settlements on the Bay.<sup>139</sup> He, in particular, saw missions as a connected network where economic potential at some could support others to create a wider Christian society.

Horden's views were echoed by the Oblates who openly recognized that agricultural potential north of Great Slave Lake was limited.<sup>140</sup> They did, however, have more southerly missions where crops could be grown; combined, these missions formed a system where the agricultural bounty of the south could help supply the north. It was for this reason that Taché established the mission at Lac la Biche as a provisioning post for the Athabasca-Mackenzie Vicariate in 1853. This would allow indigenous Christians to settle in the north while unidentified but sustainable economic opportunities for them,

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<sup>137</sup> John Mackay to Bompas, 15 July 1872, CMSA-C/C1/O41/82.

<sup>138</sup> Scott, "Cultivating Christians," 28.

<sup>139</sup> Horden to Venn, 11 October 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O33/29.

<sup>140</sup> "Missions de Mackenzie," *Missions* 6 (1867): 343.



**3.17:** Field behind the Catholic Mission at Fort Chipewyan, c.1900. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-019536*

away from the fur trade and traditional indigenous life, were developed.<sup>141</sup> Bompas suggested a similar strategy using Fort Liard as a supply mission, but this never materialized.<sup>142</sup> The Oblates, however, had an advantage over the CMS in regards to agriculture establishments, using the brothers to experiment with agricultural techniques for adaptation to northern settings. By 1866, Grouard and Clut reported good productivity for limited crops at both Providence and Chipewyan, although they could only supply the needs of the mission. At Chipewyan, a swamp had been drained

<sup>141</sup> "Rapport sur le Vicariat d'Attabaska et Mackenzie," *Missions* 11 (1873): 364; Grouard to Sister Marie Colomb Cox, 15 October 1879, AD-HPF4191.C75R-138.

<sup>142</sup> Bompas, "Athabasca Diocese," 1883, LAC-MG17-B1.14.178.

for this purpose, something the CMS simply did not have the staff to even attempt (fig. 3.17).<sup>143</sup>

Yet, by 1870, there was no native settlement despite significant success with regard to conversion. Both organizations found that many indigenous people were interested in their spiritual message, although they were certainly selective and did not blindly adopt all Christian teachings; this was particularly notable in the numerous syncretic movements that developed throughout the mid- to late-nineteenth century which combined aspects of indigenous and Christian belief and practice.<sup>144</sup> They were not, however, interested in staying at the missions for long periods of time, rendering settlement strategies effectively moot. However, both organizations remained adamant that civilization, in some form, would eventually come. Faraud was particularly clear in his belief that this was the case, writing “Civilization in its slow but progressive march has arrived to the people, still nomads, in the extreme north of the American continent.”<sup>145</sup>

Faraud saw the stations themselves as enacting Christianity and civilization, even if they could not settle indigenous people and, with limited agriculture, the mission station

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<sup>143</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 96; Clut to Fabre, 7 December 1866, AD-GLPP-660; Duchaussois, *Grey Nuns*, 145.

<sup>144</sup> Abel, *Drum Songs*, 120-21; John Webster Grant, “Missionaries and Messiahs in the Northwest,” *Studies in Religion* 9, no. 2 (1980) : 128.

<sup>145</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 253. “La civilisation dans sa marche lente, mais progressive, est arrive jusqu’aux peuples, encore nomads, de l’extrême nord du continent américain.”



would have to be the primary means through which Christian values and behaviours were transmitted. Civilization, as defined by Coates, did not hinge entirely on the idea of agricultural settlements, although this was usually how it was manifested; Faraud, however, saw the march of civilization as present in the changed moral and social behaviour of his converts and in the creation of what he saw as a Christian society, as well as what he hoped was a slowly changing relationship with the land.

In particular, Faraud saw this change at Fort Chipewyan. When he left the station to take up the bishopric at Providence, he wrote:

What a difference from the day when I had arrived in Athabasca! Now in these places so long empty, a considerable population had conglomerated, in these men who now looked like brothers, Christianity had replaced idolatry, barbarism gave way to civilization and when the tents stood around my establishment, when the bell was heard, this was no longer a savage tribe which gathered there, it was a society of Christians.<sup>146</sup>

Faraud was under no impression that the Dene had or would settle permanently at Fort Chipewyan (fig. 3.18). Nevertheless, he saw the arrival of civilization in the cultural change missionaries had begun to enact on indigenous communities. Although this usually meant transforming indigenous people into Christian farmers, it also included more subtle shifts, such as the adoption of monogamous marriage practice and the

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<sup>146</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 203. “Quelle différence du jour où j’étais arrivé à Atthabaskaw! Maintenant, en ces lieux déserts si longtemps, une population considérable venait s’agglomérer; chez ses homes, qui désormais se regardaient comme des frères, le christianisme avait remplacé l’idolâtrie, la barbarie avait fait fait place à la civilisation et quand les tentes se dressaient à l’entour de mon établissement, quand la cloche se faisant entendre, ce n’était plus une tribu sauvage qui était là réunie, c’était une société de chrétiens.”



**3.18:** Fort Resolution, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-213*

*This was the situation that Faraud found himself in at Fort Chipewyan and the reality in most other northern mission, although this was not what missionaries ultimately desired.*

adaptation of traditional patterns of life and leisure to accommodate Christian worship practice, perhaps less visible, but no less important than the growth of agricultural communities.

Like the introduction of agriculture which occurred through spatial modification to indigenous land, other manifestations of civilization were also introduced through Christian places.<sup>147</sup> Defined Christian space, and its associated activities, enforced a set of beliefs and behaviours direct associated with the mission station and, by extension, Christianity. The designation of the mission station as different from indigenous space

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<sup>147</sup> Morgan, "Encounters," 54; Christophers, *Positioning*, 67; Scott, "Cultivating Christians," 23.

and requiring a different set of beliefs and behaviours was strong enough that some missionaries expressed concern that indigenous converts would behave like Christians in the mission space and like non-Christians in their own because of the clear associations between belief, lifestyle and space developed in the northern mission field.<sup>148</sup>

Nevertheless, for missionaries, the changes that took place within this vital zone of encounter indicated the first steps towards the development of a civilized, Christian population, as exemplified through the changes Faraud observed among the Dene at Fort Chipewyan, of a population who had participated in at least some of the religious, moral and social norms of nineteenth-century European society.

Civilization was also defined through the relationship with people and the natural environment; the establishment of stations began the slow process of modifying that relationship through the introduction of buildings.<sup>149</sup> For missionaries who believed that buildings brought a landscape to completion through the demonstration of man's ordained dominance over the natural world, and God's desire for communities to settle, the establishment of mission stations enabled that to occur, although few, and far between.<sup>150</sup> Some missionaries believed that providing an example of how Christians related to their landscape alone could be a catalyst for societal change in indigenous people and could be more effective such that "through the power of imitation [they]

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<sup>148</sup> Séguin to Faraud, 16 May 1866, AD-GLPPC-30.

<sup>149</sup> Sivasundarum, *Godly Empire*, 5.

<sup>150</sup> Sivasundarum, *Godly Empire*, 148; 175; Christophers, *Positioning*, 78; Francis, "Civilizing," 87.

might become more assimilated to civilized life.”<sup>151</sup> They also looked to the future when, through their work, the land and people might be converted, civilized, and settled; Faraud wrote of Fort Chipewyan: “This is where I dream of a flourishing city. I see there already rising churches, houses...; I dream of drying out the marshes, opening canals, cutting down the large trees”,<sup>152</sup> thereby both settling indigenous people and subduing the landscape by transforming it through the technological advancements of European civilization.

However, mission stations also directly changed the relationship of indigenous people with their landscape by changing patterns of travel and creating places of pilgrimage. The perceived unpredictability of nomadic life was a consistent issue for missionaries, not least of all because it did not correlate to their ordered world view. The creation of stations to which indigenous people would travel at pre-established times changed this by creating regularized cycles of migration based on the Christian calendar and centred on the mission station, as opposed to the seasonal changes of the natural environment.<sup>153</sup> Like pilgrimages in the Christian world, travelling to mission stations created a break from everyday, non-Christian indigenous life and reoriented that time

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<sup>151</sup> Bompas, “The Esquimaux of Mackenzie River,” [1871], CMSA-C/C1/O10/39.

<sup>152</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 120. “C’est là que je rêve une cite florissante. J’y vois déjà surgir des églises, des maisons...je rêve de dessécher les marais, d’ouvrir des canaux, d’abattre les grands arbres...”

<sup>153</sup> Axtell, *European*, 47; Petitot to his parents, 28 February 1870, *Missions* 9 (1870): 367.

towards religion and its location within the landscape.<sup>154</sup> This was viewed as creating lasting change in indigenous life through the creation of fundamental shifts in indigenous society based on Christian precedent and its foundation in permanent, fixed structures, as opposed to the perceived fluidity of nature.

This effect of permanent stations has been observed in both the late-nineteenth-century Anglican and Catholic missions in Zimbabwe, where travelling to the station changed the relationship between local people, migration and place. It was particularly marked in the Trappist mission at Triashill, established in 1896, whose geographic isolation forced Christians to change their movement patterns to visit it. As a result, it became a place of pilgrimage for converts who wished to visit the priests there, changing how people travelled through and worked within the landscape.<sup>155</sup> Visiting the mission closely mirrored pilgrimages to sacred sites in Christian traditions, particularly in Catholicism. Missions in northern Canada functioned in much the same way and the CMS and OMI were confident that indigenous people would change their movement patterns to accommodate the missions because they were interested in what the missionaries had to offer, particularly literacy.<sup>156</sup> Although generally near or at HBC posts, indigenous people changed their movements to visit the posts when the missionary was present, as

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<sup>154</sup> Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 4; 148; Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 136; Mackenzie, "Missionaries," 122.

<sup>155</sup> Ranger "Taking Hold," 181-82.

<sup>156</sup> Abel, *Drum Songs*, 118.

opposed to the established trading season; others began to change which posts they visited in order to come in contact with the missionaries, a development the HBC regarded with serious concern.<sup>157</sup> This was particularly marked at Providence, the only northern mission away from an HBC post, where the Dene integrated the site into their movements, as Grandin had desired; a similar change happened further south amongst the Cree around Stanley Mission until the relocation of the nearby HBC post.<sup>158</sup> Although this recognized that indigenous people were still nomadic, and, by extension, not settling into Christian communities, the creation of permanent stations began the process of reorienting indigenous life towards Christian sites through disruption in the physical and human geography of the landscape. In this way, missionaries not only changed the landscape, but also how people lived within it through the slow introduction of a programme of civilization that, even without an agricultural component, was designed to enact significant change on indigenous people.

### *Conclusion*

By the end of the 1860s, it was clear that mission work in the north was not the same as in the southern part of Rupert's Land and required new strategies. In particular, the vastness of the landscape and its inability to support the development of large-scale

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<sup>157</sup> Gaudet to Ross, 7 February 1861; James Lockhart to Ross, 5 July 1861, PAA-PR1971.0220-212.

<sup>158</sup> Goosen, "Relationship," 107-109.

agriculture shaped missionaries' approach to evangelization by forcing a re-evaluation of existing models. As a result, both organizations focused on the development of large spatial networks of missions, establishing the Christian frontier and contact zone where they could interact with indigenous people, of which buildings were a vital part.

At their most basic, this network of stations served to attempt to convert indigenous people by providing a space where missionaries could interact with indigenous communities and introduce the tenets of Christianity. On the other hand, they also provided a space to begin to civilize people and environment by modifying the landscape through the introduction of a European space independent from the mandate and worldview of the HBC. It was a change in space that was both physical, in the sense that the mission stations were real, constructed space where missionaries and indigenous people interacted, and symbolic, in the ability of the station to claim the land for Christ through its presence on the landscape. By the end of the 1860s, neither organization had pushed back the wilderness, nor civilized the land and its people, but, entrenched in stations across the northern half of the continent, believed that they were poised to do so.

## 4: The Mission House

The first step in establishing a tangible presence in the north was the construction of a mission house. Although stations grew and expanded as missionaries consolidated their establishments with new structures, such as churches and schools, the mission house was a fundamental aspect of the everyday life of the mission and a key agent in the dissemination of information and ideology. Not only did the mission house provide missionaries with a place to live, but also provided an initial site for worship and education. Initial reliance on the mission house as the primary structure of the station was standard practice throughout the global mission field for both Protestant and Catholic organizations. However, in the Arctic mission, the slow development of the missions due to a lack of resources and a small population meant that the mission house



remained an integral site of encounter within the mission for much longer than elsewhere, increasing its importance in the narratives of contact and conversion.<sup>1</sup>

The difficulties faced by northern missionaries in staffing and the implementation of the agricultural settlement made the home, especially in the 1850s and 1860s, the primary space of cultural and ideological mediation. In the absence of a church, it became the place where ideas about doctrine, worship and ritual were transmitted. In a landscape where large-scale settlement was unrealistic, the mission house served as a didactic space where missionaries could demonstrate how Christian people should live within a wilderness context. These ostensibly private spaces were both open and public, taking on a central role in the development of the mission station as a primary site of encounter and evangelization where missionaries could introduce to indigenous communities the first lessons of Christianity and civilization, and their spiritual and temporal ramifications. Domestic spaces played a central role in the growth of missions as their primary site of encounter, cultural exchange and transformation in the drive to spread Christianity throughout the north and change the lives of indigenous people and society in fundamental ways.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bompas, *Charge Delivered by the Bishop of Athabasca at the First Meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca, held at Fort Simpson, September 4 1876*, CMSA-C/C1/O/2A/14B.

<sup>2</sup>Fleming to Venn, 16 September 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O22/5.

### *Creating Presence*

Between 1861 and 1864, Grandin visited most of the Oblates' missions in the Mackenzie to take stock of their position before the creation of the new Apostolic Vicariate. Upon his arrival at Fort Good Hope in November 1861, the focus of his journal entry was primarily on the mission house. Constructed by the HBC, it was just 18 by 22 feet and of poor construction; Séguin described it as like "going down into a cavern."<sup>3</sup> Grandin, however, was more focused on its function, noting: "[i]t is a wooden house like all the buildings in this territory...it serves simultaneously as a church, exercise room, recreation room, rectory, dormitory and kitchen"; it was, in his words, "a veritable omnibus"<sup>4</sup> combining all functions of the mission under a single roof.

This first house at Fort Good Hope is representative of many early, northern mission houses which gradually evolved from log cabins to larger, more-substantial structures as the missions consolidated.<sup>5</sup> No matter their form, they were recognized as important structures in both the establishment of missions and their eventual growth, such as in Duchaussois' 1924 text on the Oblates' northern missions. Duchaussois also asserted

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<sup>3</sup> Séguin to Mouchette, 20 July 1862, *Missions* 5 (1866): 244. "...descendre à la cave..."

<sup>4</sup> Grandin Journal, 15 November 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 363-64. "C'est une maison en bois, comme tous les constructions au pays....Elle sert en même temps d'église, de salle des exercices, de salle de récréation, de réfectoire, de dortoir et de cuisine; c'est un véritable omnibus."

<sup>5</sup> Young to CMS, 4 December 1888, *AL*(1888): 211.



**4.1:** Catholic Mission House, Hay River, c.1888. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1992-29-73*

that house construction was a developmental process, generally beginning as a one-roomed cabin and growing to larger, multi-room, multi-storey structures as missionaries became established within the landscape; this process occurred at both Anglican and Catholic missions.<sup>6</sup>

There are few surviving images of these early houses and no surviving examples. An image preserved in the HBC archives shows the Oblate mission house at Hay River in 1888 (fig. 4.1), which is likely similar to the initial log houses erected at missions in the 1850s and 1860s. A similar example is the CMS' house at Lesser Slave Lake in the early

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<sup>6</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 115-22.



4.2: CMS Mission House, Lesser Slave Lake c. 1890. *Provincial Archives of Alberta, A5051*

1890s, which shows a slightly more-developed approach, using squared timber (fig. 4.2). However, the construction and reconstruction of houses was a near-constant endeavour, replacing older building as they deteriorated and accommodating the ever-growing needs of the mission, particularly with the arrival of new staff and, for the CMS, families.<sup>7</sup> Newer houses were generally larger and more decorative, mudded on the exterior to give a whitewashed appearance and increase insulation, such as the house constructed by Séguin and Kearney at Fort Good Hope in the 1880s (fig. 4.3). They were often multi-storied and included a range of rooms: reception rooms, parlours, bedrooms and studies.

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<sup>7</sup> Horden to Wright, 4 May 1875, CMSA-C/C1/O2D/10; Joan Mackinnon, "Oblate House-Chapels in the Vicariate of Athabasca-Mackenzie," *Western Oblate Studies* 2 (1992): 222.



**4.3:** Catholic Mission House, Fort Good Hope, c.1880s. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives*, 1987-250-N022

One of the few surviving mission houses is of the later type: a structure constructed by Oblates François Le Serrec and Auguste Husson at Dunvegan (fig. 4.4) in 1889 to replace an older 1869 structure.<sup>8</sup> A two-storey house, it consists of a main room, or *salle*, where indigenous people were received, two bedrooms and a chapel on the ground floor and bedrooms, a small library and storage area upstairs. A separate kitchen had been erected 1881 and was retained after the rebuilding of the house.

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<sup>8</sup> Larmour, "Grouard," 107; Mackinnon, "House Chapels," 223-24; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 208; Auguste Husson to Farad, 28 December 1889, AD-GLPPC-16.



**4.4:** Catholic Mission House, Dunvegan. *Author's photo*

Of the CMS' houses, only that at Fort Selkirk from 1892 and one's shell at Hay River survive (fig. 4.5), the latter erected between 1893 and 1894, and described by Reeve as "good substantial log house."<sup>9</sup> However, images of later houses, including that at Churchill erected in 1885 (fig. 4.6), show the evolution of houses from log cabins to more-developed structures.<sup>10</sup> One of the few descriptions of a later mission house comes from C.E. Whittaker at Peel River. He wrote:

The houses here are all made of hewn log, plastered inside and outside with white clay and most are roofed with bark peeled from the Spruce. The house in which we are living at present, Archdeacon McDonald's house, is a typical one. It is 40x24 feet

<sup>9</sup> William Day Reeve to CMS, 20 November 1894, *AL* (1894): 572.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Nevitt to CMS, December 1886, *AL* (1886): 248; Joseph Lofthouse to C.C. Fenn, 25 September 1885, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1885/257; Lofthouse to R. Bell, 7 January 1887, LAC-MG29-B15.24.42.

long...There is a hall through the middle and two rooms on each end of the house, making two bedrooms, a sitting room and a dining room. In the last we also have school, hold service during the cold weather and receive natives, both Indian and Huskies. Our bedrooms being well-warmed also serve for study. There is also a kitchen, but during the winter, the greater part of the cooking is done on the big box stove in the dining room. An upper half story of the house makes a good lumber room.<sup>11</sup>

This house is clearly different from that at Dunvegan, but, still performed the same vital functions. Architecturally, the mission house was a fluid and flexible form, but, at the same time, it provided a consistent frontier space, no matter its size or sophistication. Although late mission houses were not the same type of omnibus structure described by Grandin, as education and worship moved into dedicated structures as missions grew, mission houses continued to play a vital role. Early mission houses set the tone for how these types of structures functioned, responding to new and difficult conditions and creating a lasting spatial type with a continuing role in the transformation of the land and its people.

The first building erected at the Catholic mission at Fort Chipewyan in 1851 was the mission house. After its construction, Faraud wrote that: "It was not just a house of boards...it was Christianity, it was civilization, which showed itself to the surprised looks of the barbarians of the New World."<sup>12</sup>It was more than a practical dwelling. Faraud saw

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<sup>11</sup> [C.E. Whittaker] to unknown, 12 June 1897, GSA-M74-3/1-B-1.

<sup>12</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 128. "Ce n'était pas seulement une maison de planches...c'était le christianisme, c'était la civilisation que se montraient aux regards surprise des barbares du nouveau monde.,"





4.5: CMS Mission House, Hay River. *Author's photo*

the house as answering a question of presence.<sup>13</sup> In an unfamiliar landscape, it was vital that missionaries asserted their presence and, by extension, their beliefs. The house provided a way to do this, and make tangible abstract ideas through material representation.<sup>14</sup>

The mission house created presence by establishing a clearly identifiable Christian enclave in contrast to its surroundings: the natural environment and the HBC post. The station as a whole also worked to this purpose, but as the first, and sometimes only, building constructed at the mission, the house was a definitive representation of the

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<sup>13</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 30.

<sup>14</sup> Hovland, "Place-Making," 338; Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 171.





4.6: CMS Mission House, Churchill, c. 1893. *University of Toronto, J.B. Tyrell Barren Lands Collection, P10409*

arrival Christianity manifested through the erection of European, Christian forms.<sup>15</sup> Manipulation of space and environment through the erection of domestic space was intended to communicate ideology and to demonstrate intent to stay.<sup>16</sup> Faraud noted, accurately or not, that an indigenous convert expressed this understanding: “Today, seeing this house, I understand that you will not leave us.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 30-39; Christophers, *Positioning*, 85; Felix Driver, “Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 13, no. 3 (1988): 277.

<sup>16</sup> Skeie, *God’s Kingdom*, 75; Stanley, “Christianity and Civilization,” 187.

<sup>17</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 129. “Aujourd’hui, en voyant cette maison, je comprends que tu ne nous laisseras pas.”

Missionaries wanted explicitly to define Christian and non-Christian space and this could be achieved by building a house, creating separation between themselves and the non-Christian elements of the environment.<sup>18</sup> By using European forms, missionaries hoped to demonstrate the difference between the new spiritual order of the Christian world, defined by a strong and ordered dwelling, and the non-Christian wilderness, characterized by naturalism and disorder.<sup>19</sup> As most mission stations looked similar, a chain of defined Christian enclaves emerged throughout the north, denoting a new presence separated physically from the pre-Christian world. The house, as the station's initial manifestation, acted as a mediating space where Christian and non-Christian worlds met and where new ideas were transmitted through teaching and spatial arrangement.<sup>20</sup> This space also included the kitchen garden, established for both basic subsistence and as the primary steps towards the agricultural ideal.

The development of designated Christian buildings established a clear relationship between the wilderness and the mission station, the latter of which worked to control the former through the creation of ordered, controlled space.<sup>21</sup> Despite, and perhaps because of, the fact that missionaries had now experienced the realities of the northern environment, their initial perception of the wilderness as disordered, sinful and un-

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<sup>18</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:275.

<sup>19</sup> Mackenzie, "Missionaries," 117.

<sup>20</sup> Skeie, *God's Kingdom*, 103.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, "Our Dwelling," 86-87.

Christian persisted.<sup>22</sup>As a result, missionaries desired to clearly separate the station from the natural world, something that could be achieved through the erection of architectural forms and the intrinsic ordering of space. Catholic and Protestant missionaries frequently described their new dwellings as both substantial and rectilinear, emphasizing characteristics such as strength and solidity.<sup>23</sup> In particular, mission houses were “quadrangular”<sup>24</sup>, using straight sides and regular forms.

This contrasted directly to the natural forms of the wilderness and indigenous dwellings, still seen as intrinsically linked to the landscape because of their portability, materials and irregular forms. Duchaussois described indigenous buildings as: “the simple lodge of the savage, that is to say, hides sewn together and surrounding a polygonal frame”<sup>25</sup> which he compared the rectilinear log house, implying the difference between wild and civilized space. The comparison that Duchaussois drew was in conformity with both Protestant and Catholic mission thought in the nineteenth century where straightness in both architecture and landscape implied Christianity and broader civilized ideals, such as the rule of law and progress. Non-rectilinear forms, by contrast, reflected the perceived

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<sup>22</sup> Émile Petitot, *Monographie de Dènè-Dindjié* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1876), 44.

<sup>23</sup> William West Kirkby Journal, 21 January 1860, CMSA-C/C1/O39/65; Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 79.

<sup>24</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 116. “quadragulaire”

<sup>25</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 118. “...la simple loge sauvage, c’est-à-dire des peaux d’original cousues ensemble et entourant un faisceau polygonal de perches...”



4.7: CMS Mission House, Whitefish Lake, c. 1920. *Provincial Archives of Alberta*, A14779

disorder and lack of spirituality in the natural world. Civilized Christianity was, therefore, indicated through the shape of the house.<sup>26</sup>

Early cabins were not always seen as ideal for this purpose because they were rough and not always well built. Eynard wrote to Faraud in 1864 of the house at Providence that: “we propose to build for you one more solid and more in conformity with the rules of geometry.”<sup>27</sup> This concern also reflected in the fact that many indigenous trappers also had similar cabins used periodically throughout the year. The “cast off log building”<sup>28</sup> that Spendlove used as a mission house at Fort Resolution in the late 1880s was better than a tent, but not the rectilinear form he desired. Geometric construction with

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<sup>26</sup> Landeg White, *Magomero: Portrait of an African Village* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 25.

<sup>27</sup> Germain Eynard to Faraud, 24 September 1864, AD-GLPPC-8.

<sup>28</sup> Spendlove to CMS, 18 December 1888, *AL* (1888): 212.

squared timbered and whitewashed walls gave linearity to the house, a direct contrast to indigenous structures.<sup>29</sup> At Whitefish Lake, CMS missionary W.G. White compared the new mission house, a “good log building”, with the “log shacks” and “canvas tepees”<sup>30</sup> of the local Cree community, emphasizing regularity, order and solidity in its rectilinear form (fig. 4.7).

Linearity in the station drew from biblical sources and was seen as a tool to beat back the moral and physical wilderness, as in Luke 3:4-5, quoting Isaiah 40:3-4, which stated:

Prepare the way of the Lord  
Make his paths straight  
Every valley shall be filled  
And every mountain and hill shall be brought low  
And the crooked shall be made straight

This passage, which Bompas referenced in an 1890 letter, implied the need to replace natural disorder with the uniformity of Christian spiritual order.<sup>31</sup> The straight line of the mission station transformed nature by controlling it.<sup>32</sup> Ideally, missionaries hoped that indigenous people would also build dwellings in this manner, thus accepting and participating in the taming of the non-Christian environment and strengthening their own conversion. However, because the local landscape and economy made this untenable, at least in the short term, the mission house took on extra significance as an

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<sup>29</sup> Mackenzie, “Missionaries,” 116.

<sup>30</sup> W.G. White to CMS, 7 January 1895, *AL* (1895): 570.

<sup>31</sup> Bompas to CMS, 6 June 1890, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1890/175.

<sup>32</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:280.



**4.8:** Kitchen Garden, Fort Good Hope, c.1910. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-245-18*

island of Christianity in the wilderness, preparing “the way of the Lord” for the future growth of Christian society.

The kitchen garden (fig. 4.8) extended these ideas outside the house. It represented an ordering of nature very directly by controlling plant life through the creation of productive space that correlated to Euro-Christian ideas of industry not found in the natural environment, still viewed as barren and infertile.<sup>33</sup> The garden demonstrated the superiority of agriculture, the progress of natural sciences, including botany, and

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<sup>33</sup> Mackenzie, “Missionaries,” 110-11.

technological development; Faraud, for example, drained a swamp at Fort Chipewyan to create a garden.<sup>34</sup> For northern missionaries, this could be a risky demonstration if gardens failed—they often did—but most missions were able to grow something, even if in an extremely limited capacity.<sup>35</sup> Gardening ordered nature by directly controlled plant life and created productive and useful space, demonstrating the ability of Christians to overcome wilderness and its inherent sinfulness through environmental modification and simultaneously preparing the land for wider Christianizing efforts.<sup>36</sup>

The house and garden were intimately connected, offering what was seen as a superior belief and lifestyle. Although there was no expectation that indigenous people would immediately move into settled communities, missionaries viewed the mission house as an example for the future and, as a result it needed to command respect and admiration to attract and communicate to potential converts.<sup>37</sup> In his writings on Africa, LMS missionary and explorer David Livingstone summarized this need, writing: “If you want to be respected by the natives, a house of decent dimensions costing an immense amount of manual labour must be built.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 120

<sup>35</sup> For example: *Select Committee* (1888), 138-39.

<sup>36</sup> Den Otter, “Anderson,” 87; Richard Drayton, *Nature’s Government: Science, Imperial Britain and the ‘Improvement’ of the World* (New Haven: Yale, 2000), 50.

<sup>37</sup> Mackenzie, “Missionaries,” 120; Skeie, *God’s Kingdom*, 81.

<sup>38</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London: James Murray, 1857), 40.



**4.9:** CMS Mission, Fort Norman, c.1892. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-194*

Convincing indigenous people to come to the mission house and to convert to Christianity required demonstration of material success, which a large and impressive mission house was able to do.<sup>39</sup> There was concern that log cabins (fig. 4.9) were in “too helpless and degrading a condition to gain the respect of the natives”<sup>40</sup>, and their gradual replacement reflected the need to rectify this issue and demonstrate the strength of Christianity in material form. Faraud believed that the size, scale and technological achievements of the house at Fort Chipewyan, for example, would inspire

<sup>39</sup> Sivasundaram, *Godly Empire*, 171; Huel, *Proclaiming*, 37.

<sup>40</sup> Bompas to CMS, June 1887, *AL* (1887): 27. See also: Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 64.



respect and awe in indigenous people, particularly when contrasted to the surrounding environment.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Grouard noted that good buildings could draw indigenous people in and also lead them to associate the superior belief set of Christian with its spatial manifestation, the house.<sup>42</sup> Strength and bounty were also seen to be demonstrated through a successful garden, which could both attract people through its provision of food and demonstrate the benefits of a settled life, although, in the north, this form of subsistence was extremely precarious.<sup>43</sup>

Missionaries believed quite strongly that this differentiation between the Christian and non-Christian world was obvious and that indigenous people recognized the presence of a new belief system in the transformation of space. Although the CMS did not do this, the OMI believed that all missions should have a house, even if only visited once a year, in order to demonstrate the arrival of Christianity.<sup>44</sup> But both organizations believed that the house indicated to indigenous people the presence of Christianity and civilization. Grouard, for example, reported of the house at Fort Liard (fig. 4.10) in 1868: “that construction did not leave the Indians indifferent. They desired the missionary amongst them but our small number did not allow us to establish ourselves in the dwelling.”<sup>45</sup>

Although Grouard was not able to stay, the house indicated the presence of the Oblates

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<sup>41</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 128.

<sup>42</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 95.

<sup>43</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 165; Hunter Journal, 8 November 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/114.

<sup>44</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 85.

<sup>45</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 113. “Cette construction ne laissait pas les Indiens indifférent. Ils désiraient le missionnaire parmi eux, mais notre petit nombre ne nous permettait pas encore de nous établir à demeure.”



**4.10:** Catholic Mission House, Fort Liard, c.1892. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-216*

*The mission house appears on the left.*

in the region, suggesting to the local Dene that they should visit the post to receive instruction. There is also indication that indigenous people recognized the new spatial arrangements as an indicator of Christian presence.<sup>46</sup> Séguin was even concerned that this differentiation might even be too strong, writing: “at the house they ask me for baptism and in their lodges they say it is purposeless”<sup>47</sup> suggesting an understanding amongst

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<sup>46</sup> Cheryl Swindrovich, “Stanley Mission: Becoming Anglican While Remaining Cree,” *Native Studies Review* 14, no. 2 (2001): 94.

<sup>47</sup> Séguin to Faraud, 16 May 1866, AD-GLPPC-30. “A la maison, ils me demandent le baptême et dans leur loges il dissent que c’est sans dessein.”

indigenous people of the clear differentiation between Christian and non-Christian that missionaries hoped to achieve.

The house was not only for indigenous people, however. For missionaries, the house provided protection from the environment in its physical and spiritual forms.<sup>48</sup> The difficult climate of the Arctic regions made dwellings absolutely imperative for “sheltering the missionary”<sup>49</sup> particularly in the winter when tents were uncomfortable and unsuitable.<sup>50</sup> Although both Protestant and Catholic missionaries frequently made use of tents and indigenous buildings while travelling, they were not suited to long-term use. McDonald noted that “it was almost impossible to maintain warmth in the lodges with any degree of comfort”;<sup>51</sup> in contrast, houses provided protection from the elements for survival and maintenance of health.<sup>52</sup> Non-European structures also presented problems for housing the necessary equipment of missions, such as books.<sup>53</sup> Simultaneously, houses also provided “the comforts of a home”<sup>54</sup> and a reminder of European life in isolated locations.

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<sup>48</sup> Stanley, “Christianity and Civilization,” 186.

<sup>49</sup> William Ridley, “In the Diocese of Caledonia,” *CMG* 30 (1903): 74.

<sup>50</sup> Séguin to [Faraud], May 1883, AD-GLPPC-32; Nouël de Krangué to Faraud, 8 November 1871, AD-GLPPC-23.

<sup>51</sup> McDonald to CMS, 25 November 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O45/8.

<sup>52</sup> Taylor, “Our Dwelling,” 89-90; Skeie, *God’s Kingdom*, 103.

<sup>53</sup> Mackinnon, “House-Chapels,” 228.

<sup>54</sup> Lofthouse to CMS, December 1886, *AL* (1886): 297.

On a spiritual level, the house provided safety against the corrupting influence of the wilderness through physical separation from it. In wilderness regions, there was a fear of cultural contamination, or missionaries “going native” and adopting the customs and practices of indigenous people to the extent that they themselves experienced cultural and moral change, and houses could provide protection from that and allow them to retain their “civilization.”<sup>55</sup> For example, when Johann Ludwig Krapf and Johannes Rebmann established a CMS mission in Rabai Mpya, Kenya, in the mid-1840s, they immediately built “a house in which Europeans could safely live” protecting both their persons and souls by separating themselves from the surrounding “native huts.”<sup>56</sup> To lose the setting of Christianity was also to lose its ideology as well as their identity and function as missionaries.<sup>57</sup> It was understood that “moral, ethical, political and physical conditions...have produced the [Christian] European”<sup>58</sup> and, in a remote mission field, it was only the last of those which could truly be controlled through the creation of a home separated from the amoral wilderness.<sup>59</sup>

When entering the mission field, the Oblates expected to be in closer contact with indigenous people because Mazenod explicitly encouraged them to live in indigenous

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<sup>55</sup> Cockran Journal, 7 October 1833, CMSA-C/C1/M2; Ashcroft et al, *Post-Colonial Studies*, 106; Anthony Volpe, “‘Going Native’ in the British Empire: David Livingstone and T.E. Lawrence Revisited,” (MA Thesis, City University of New York, 2014), 4.

<sup>56</sup> Stock, *History*, 2:125.

<sup>57</sup> Hovland, “Umpumulo,” 146.

<sup>58</sup> Benjamin Kidd, *The Control of the Tropics* (New York: MacMillan, 1898), 50.

<sup>59</sup> Lofthouse to CMS, 22 August 1890, AL (1890): 422; Canham to Fenn, 26 January 1883, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1883/117.

communities for parts of the year as a practical measure.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, they also expressed concerns over becoming “savage” through their separation from European life.<sup>61</sup> Mazenod also feared that missionaries could lose their sense of Christian community through isolation; he saw mission work as community-based and believed that priests should operate in pairs, at minimum, in order to retain their faith and participate in the sacraments.<sup>62</sup> As the Oblates generally travelled alone because of low staffing, it was in the mission house where the community of a Catholic religious order was formed and maintained, preserving the culture, faith and individual souls of missionaries through a distinctly Christian setting and physical space.

While the dichotomy between wilderness and civilization was fundamental to missionaries’ understanding of the home, the mission house also created a separation between the mission and the HBC by emphasizing their differing functions and giving missionaries independence.<sup>63</sup> Although physically similar to HBC buildings in regards to size, form and construction, the mission house was distinguished from them by its ownership, function and physical separation from the post. A late nineteenth-century map of Fort Norman shows this separation between the CMS and the HBC (fig. 4.11). More radically, Séguin constructed a mission house at Tsiigehtchic in 1867 away from the

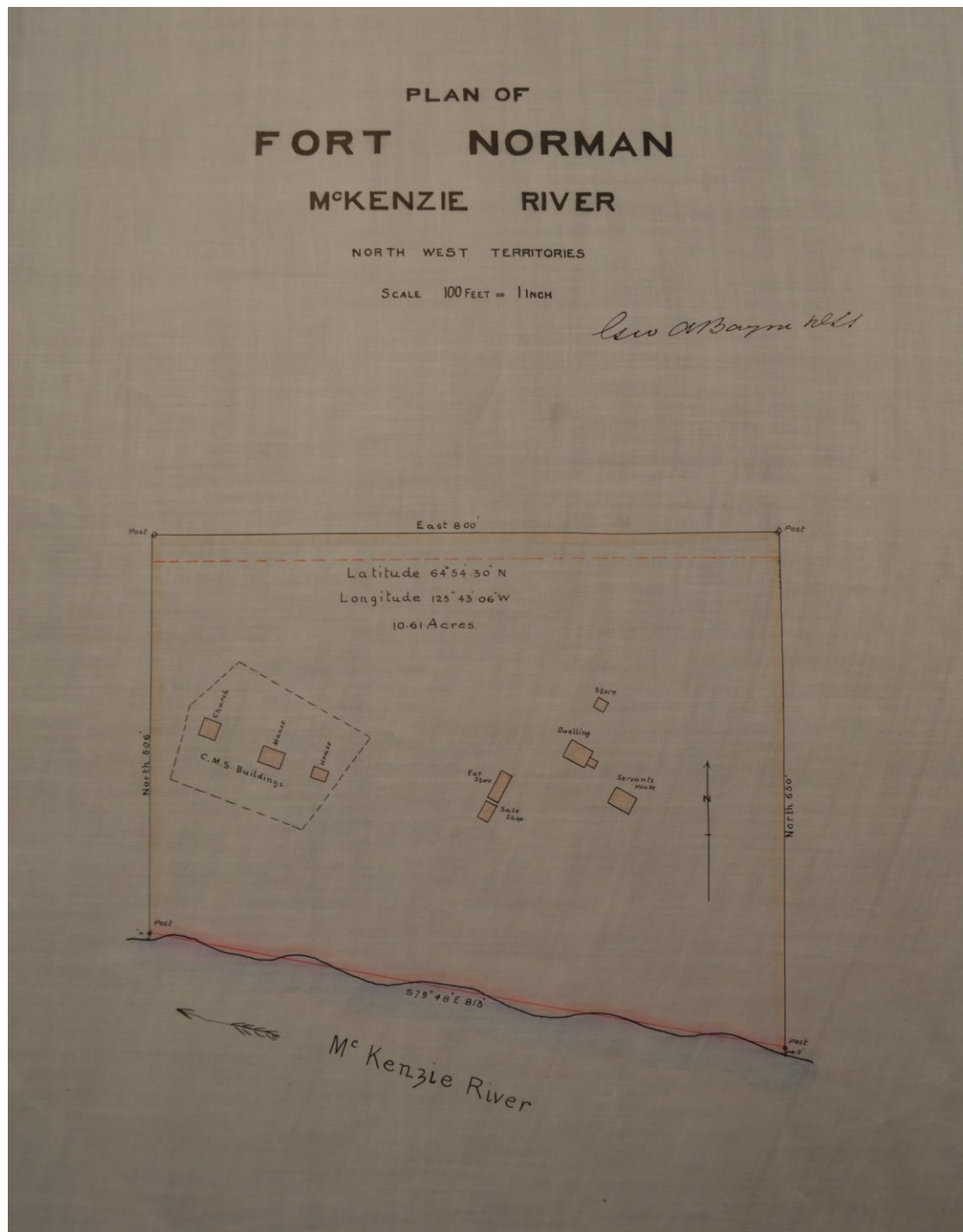
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<sup>60</sup> Mazenod, *Instructions*, 14.

<sup>61</sup> Clut to Fabre, 29 February 1868, AD-GLPP-668. See also: Huel, “Strategy,” 249.

<sup>62</sup> Mazenod to Faraud, 6 March 1857, in *Lettres*, 2:146-47. See also: Huel, *Proclaiming*, 4-5; 22-23.

<sup>63</sup> Vincent to CMS, 14 February 1861, CMSA-C/C1/O70/27; Ducot to Clut, 23 July 1876, *Missions* 16 (1878): 25-26.



4.11: Map of Fort Norman, c.1898. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, G.1/315



**4.12:** Fort Chipewyan, c.1892. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-164*

post at Peel's River, like Grandin's at Providence, in order to be completely separated from the HBC.<sup>64</sup> The Oblates were significantly more aware of the need for separation than their Anglican counterparts, as they were often less welcome at the posts.<sup>65</sup> An 1891 photograph of Fort Chipewyan by HBC Chief Factor James McDougall aptly demonstrates this dynamic with the Anglican church at the edge of the post and the Catholic establishment at a distance (fig. 4.12).

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<sup>64</sup> Séguin to Faraud, 24 May 1867, AD-GLPPC-30.

<sup>65</sup> Séguin to Faraud, 2 July 1877, AD-GLPPC-32.

On one level, the separation of space was practical. Missionaries often found that HBC buildings were unsuitable, particularly for worship.<sup>66</sup> E.A. Watkins, at Fort George in the mid-1850s, found the upstairs apartments he had been lent were too small for gatherings and too difficult for the elderly and infirm to access.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the space designated for worship, the local officer's bed-sitting room, was similarly unsuitable because of its atmosphere. Watkins wrote: "It is not very *church-like*, for to say nothing of their being a bed in one corner and a cupboard without doors in another the walls are purposely decorated with the scraps out of the *Illustrated London News*."<sup>68</sup> While the parlour of a mission house was also not a church, sober decoration and a flexible layout created an appropriate setting for Christian worship quite different from an HBC officer's bedroom.

Separate housing also provided a new non-indigenous nexus of activity around which indigenous people could gather representing a radically different value set to its commercial counterpart. This also reinforced the idea of the mission house as a public space of encounter. In both North America and throughout the global mission field, the public nature of the mission house meant that indigenous people could and did move freely through it, something that was not possible in the hierarchical and private nature of HBC domestic space. Because of the differences in the public versus private nature of

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<sup>66</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 66.

<sup>67</sup> E.A. Watkins to Venn, 1 September 1852, CMSA-C/C1/O/71/1.

<sup>68</sup> Watkins to CMS, 7 January 1853, CMSA-C/C1/O71/1.



these spaces, the use of HBC quarters for missionary purposes often caused problems, particularly when indigenous people or low-level Company servants entered into an officer's home to visit a missionary.<sup>69</sup> To mitigate this problem and to create a space that was truly open to encounter and cultural mediation, missionaries needed a separate house.

The need for openness hinged on the understanding that the house was fundamentally a frontier space and the primary contact point with indigenous people. As a space where Christian and non-Christian could move freely in and out and grapple with one another in their beliefs systems and way of life, it was also a place of transformation where, in the missionaries' minds, non-Christian indigenous people would undergo radical change. The mission house was central to this process and missionaries recognized this, encouraging indigenous people to set up camp nearby and enter into Christian space.<sup>70</sup> The importance placed on the house by missionaries is illustrated through an early encounter between Kirkby and an unnamed priest, likely Grollier, recounted in the former's journal in October 1859.<sup>71</sup> Kirkby was perturbed that the priest had informed the Dene at Fort Simpson that to enter the Anglican house was to have evil befall them. As a result, Kirkby refused to visit the Dene tents, insisting on the house as the only

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<sup>69</sup> Holmes to CMS, 29 December 1887, *AL* (1887): 283; John S. Long, "'Shaganash': Early Protestant Missionaries and the Adoption of Christianity by the Western James Bay Cree, 1840-1893," (Ed.D Thesis, University of Toronto, 1986), 77.

<sup>70</sup> Kirkby Journal, 6 June 1864, CMSA-C/C1/O39/67.

<sup>71</sup> Kirkby Journal, 28 October 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/64.

space of contact in order to reassert its place as a site of salvation. That the house took on such a central role in this incident demonstrates the understanding both Kirkby and the priest had of this space's function within mission, as a place of contact and with the power to enact real transformation.

### *Converting People*

Although it was clear to missionaries that the house was an important space of encounter where transformation of indigenous people could occur, they also had to reconcile with what that transformation actually would be. Accepted practice from across the global mission field suggested that the house functioned by encouraging indigenous converts to build their own houses in imitation, settle and become part of a civilized Christian community as Belcourt and Cockran had attempted to develop at Red River. But, by the 1860s, it was clear that northern indigenous people were not going to settle because of the need to continue in their traditional economy for subsistence, forcing missionaries to reconsider the specific role of the house within their overall programme.<sup>72</sup> In order to reconcile with the realities of the northern landscape, missionaries were forced to accept the fact that indigenous people could still be Christians when participating in a traditional economy, as "Christian

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<sup>72</sup> Taché, *Ésquisse*, 85; Kirkby Journal, 13 July 1861, CMSA-C/C1/O39/66.

hunters.”<sup>73</sup> Missionaries recognized that Christianity could still benefit indigenous people living in nomadic communities, not because they suddenly disconnected settlement with conversion, but rather because becoming “Christian hunters” was the first realistic step towards long-term societal and environmental change.<sup>74</sup>

This was more explicitly recognized by the Oblates.<sup>75</sup> Mazenod had anticipated this scenario, writing:

In the regions where abandoning the wandering life would prove impossible... the missionaries will pass, always in twos, to offer them the relief of their ministry, seeing them as home, at the most favourable time of year and remaining amongst them as long as is necessary.<sup>76</sup>

Mazenod saw this strategy as rooted in Pauline precedent, echoing Paul’s travels between early Christian communities.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, the “apostolic activities”<sup>78</sup> of northern missionaries were also rooted in the idea of “[p]eregrinari pro Christo”<sup>79</sup>, or the act of being a pilgrim for Christ in evangelization, in an emulation of the itinerate, non-urban work of the early Irish church.<sup>80</sup> The non-urban context of early missions to Ireland was

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<sup>73</sup> Abel, *Drum Songs*, 118.

<sup>74</sup> Swindrovich, “Stanley Mission,” 92; Usher, “Social Theory,” 39.

<sup>75</sup> Carney, “Native-Wilderness,” 61-62.

<sup>76</sup> De Mazenod, *Instructions*, 14. “Dans les régions où cet abandon de la vie errante s’avérerait impossible, comme dans celles où le petit nombre des habitants ne demanderait pas la présence habituelle du prêtre, les Missionnaires passeront, toujours à deux, au milieu des tribus, pour leur offrir les secours de leur ministère, les voyant chez elles, à l’époque de l’année la plus favorable et restant parmi elles aussi longtemps qu’il sera nécessaire.”

<sup>77</sup> De Mazenod to Ricard, 6 December 1851, *Lettres*, 2:30-31.

<sup>78</sup> Grouard to Cox, 3 December 1872, AD-HPF4191.C750-134. “...activités apostolique...”

<sup>79</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 59.

<sup>80</sup> Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Duchaussois, *Aux Glaces Polaires : Indiens et Esquimaux* (Lyon : Œuvre Apostolique de Marie Immaculée, 1921), 111-12; Faraut, *Dix-Huit*, 253.

explicitly cited by Catholic missionaries as an example they could follow when working with northern indigenous communities, particularly when most other missions from the early church and in the preceding centuries had taken place within settled communities.<sup>81</sup> These precedents justified a mission based on a non-settled model where missionaries worked flexibly within the confines of indigenous life. Furthermore, many Oblates believed that indigenous people possessed a “natural” sense of religion and morality in their traditional communities, which would allow them to more easily become true Christians.<sup>82</sup>

The CMS was more ambivalent about this idea; some, including McDonald and Edmund Peck, worked similarly to their Catholic counterparts in order to integrate Christianity with a hunting and trapping economy, sometimes even articulating the belief that indigenous people could be better Christians away from the moral ills of HBC post.<sup>83</sup> The resultant practices from this approach, particularly the encouragement of indigenous lay agents, fit well into some of Venn’s strategies for the growth of the “native church”, specifically the need to create a framework “possessed of that freedom and elasticity which will enable it to adapt itself to the exigencies and circumstances of the new people amongst whom it is to grow.”<sup>84</sup> However, other missionaries, notably Bompas,

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<sup>81</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 200.

<sup>82</sup> Petitot, *Dènè-Dindjié*, 30; Gualtieri, “Perceptions,” 303-309.

<sup>83</sup> McDonald to Long, 31 January 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O45/6; Richard Faries to CMS, 1 December 1899, *AL* (1899): 687.

<sup>84</sup> “Government of Native Churches,” *CMI* 15 (1869):

were not entirely convinced of the effectiveness of a non-settled approach and their lack of defined direction as to how to conduct the mission ultimately led to an overall practice that was extremely inconsistent.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, the CMS was forced to adopt a strategy that was not settlement-focussed for, as Kirkby articulated: “To the woods and streams must the Indian Tribes of the District look for a means of subsistence but happily, though a handmaid to Christianity, civilization is not necessary to an explanation of the Gospel.”<sup>86</sup>

This shift in mindset was a major change from pre-existing assumptions of mission development. Architecturally, this also changed the role of the mission house. As opposed to being something that indigenous people were to directly emulate and recreate, it became a site for the transfer of Christian knowledge that indigenous converts could take with them onto the land. It was, therefore, a site of “spiritual and moral change”<sup>87</sup>, a central hub in the dissemination of ideology in a Christian community that was scattered as opposed to settled.

The primary goal of evangelization was the conversion to Christianity. As a result, missionaries focused on the need to inculcate Christian ideology and encourage

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<sup>85</sup> Abel, “Bishop Bompas,” 122.

<sup>86</sup> Kirkby Journal, 13 July 1861, CMSA-C/C1/O39/66.

<sup>87</sup> Bompas to Abraham Cowley, 29 July 1869, CMSA-C/C1/O10/26.

converts to continue practicing Christianity while engaging in traditional activities.<sup>88</sup> This may have seemed like the obvious focus of the mission, yet the difficulty nineteenth-century missionaries faced in separating the core tenets of Christianity from the idea of civilization made conversion alone a difficult policy to enact. Nevertheless, the goal of both organizations was articulated by Richard Young, who became Bishop of Athabasca in 1884, and wrote to the CMS: “Our constant prayer is that the Holy Spirit may fasten the words to their hearts so that they may carry them to their distant hunting grounds and solitary camps.”<sup>89</sup> The mission house was a vital contact space but, in a mission’s early days, it was also a worship space; some mission houses, such as the CMS’ house at Fort Norman, served this purpose for decades. In this capacity, the house served as the primary site for the inculcation of Christian theology and practice to new and potential converts.

The role of the house as a worship space was most clearly articulated in the Oblate houses which contained attached chapels; these buildings were tellingly referred to as “house-chapels.”<sup>90</sup> In accordance with Catholic liturgical practice, the missionaries needed a designated space to celebrate Mass and to store the consecrated Host, keeping the sacred and domestic separate.<sup>91</sup> To do so, they created designated space within the house, either as a cordoned off area or separate room, which opened into the

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<sup>88</sup> McDonald Journal, 31 December 1869, CMSA-C/C1/O45/39.

<sup>89</sup> Richard Young to CMS, 4 December 1888, *AL* (1888): 212.

<sup>90</sup> Mackinnon, “House-Chapels,” 219-30.

<sup>91</sup> Clut to Taché, 28 December 1858, AD-GLPP-629.



4.13: Interior Chapel, Catholic Mission House, Dunvegan. *Author's photo*

main *salle* to create a large space for seating with the chapel area serving as the sanctuary. Grouard noted of the original mission house at Providence that “leaning against the gable end of our house, [there was] a small chapel” separated from the *salle* by doors which, when opened, “became a Cathedral.”<sup>92</sup> Where there were not the resources to construct a separate room, a partition was created within the *salle*. The house at Fort Good Hope, for example, used a curtain to create “a sanctuary separate from our dwelling”<sup>93</sup> and definitively separate domestic and sacred functions, but, by

<sup>92</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 64. “Adossée au pignon de notre maison, une petit chapelle...elle devenait Cathédrale.” See also : Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 117.

<sup>93</sup> Grandin Journal, 15 November 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 365. “...un sanctuaire séparé de notre habitation.”

the summer of 1862, Séguin and Kearney had built “a small chapel...to have the good God always with us.”<sup>94</sup>

In the present Dunvegan house, the chapel was constructed simultaneously with the rest of the building (fig.4.13).<sup>95</sup> The chapel contains an altar and tabernacle and was used both privately by the priests and as the sanctuary for a larger church space. It was here that indigenous people would be introduced to the “true principles of religion.”<sup>96</sup> Mass was held there in the standard practice of Catholic worship, insofar as was possible within a small space.

The CMS also used the mission house for worship and catechetical teaching. However, the services held within the Protestant mission houses was less formal in regards to the partitioning of space because of differing beliefs on the Eucharist. As an evangelical organization with a clear commitment to Low Church practice and belief, the Anglican missionaries did not believe in the real presence and therefore did not demand spatial separation for it.<sup>97</sup> The Eucharist was only administered three or four times per year in many missions; services consisted primarily of sermons and readings because salvation

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<sup>94</sup> Séguin to Mouchette, 20 July 1862, *Missions* 5 (1866): 245. “...une petite chapelle...afin d’avoir le Dieu toujours avec nous.”

<sup>95</sup> Husson to Faraut, 28 December 1889, AD-GLPPC-16.

<sup>96</sup> Ducot to Faraut, 10 February 1880, AD-GLPPC-7. “...vrais principes de la religion...”

<sup>97</sup> Peake, “Missionary Expansion,” 50-51; Christopher J. Cocksworth, *Evangelical Eucharistic Thought in the Church of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 176.





**4.14:** Parlour, CMS Mission House at Churchill, c.1893. *University of Toronto, J.B. Tyrell Barren Lands Collection, P10539*

was to be found through the scriptures, participation in prayer and the Holy Spirit.<sup>98</sup> As a result, worship was held in the main room of the mission house.<sup>99</sup> This room was a flexible space, easily rearranged for services. Unlike the room used by Watkins at Rupert's House, the parlours of mission houses were generally furnished and decorated either in a way that was extremely primitive, particularly in the early stages of missions, or in a way that reflected Victorian fashion. The parlour at the house in Churchill, for example, is demonstrative of the latter (fig. 4.14): fashionable, tasteful and modest.

<sup>98</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca*, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1892/226; McDonald Journal, 30 December 1867, CMSA-C/C1/O45/37.

<sup>99</sup> Lofthouse to CMS, 26 July 1887, AL (1887): 32.

In addition to providing space for worship, missionaries used the house as a place to teach indigenous people about Christianity and encourage their continued participation in lay-based activities, including services in camps away from the mission “to keep alive within them a spirit of devotion and piety”<sup>100</sup>, particularly through private and family prayer.<sup>101</sup> Vincent summarized:

Together with the reading of God’s word, private and family prayer are very necessary to our growth in spirituality. Where these are carefully observed and daily practised, I think we may safely say that there a work of grace is being carried on...from many a wigwam and Indian tent.<sup>102</sup>

To encourage indigenous participation in these activities, missionaries needed to provide basic Christian instruction around both belief and practice. To answer this need, the mission house also served as a mission’s first school where indigenous converts were “taught the ABCs of Christian doctrine.”<sup>103</sup> Although mission education shifted to an institutional setting by the late-nineteenth century, the house was the earliest educational site.<sup>104</sup> Like worship, school, initially for interested adults, was generally held in the parlour or *salle*, and was a central aspect of the interaction between missionaries and indigenous people. Early education, as presented in the mission house, focused on catechism and literacy; it was often quite informal consisting of what McDonald called “conversation on religion.”<sup>105</sup> One major aspect of this was catechetical teaching. The

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<sup>100</sup> McDonald Journal, 26 April 1868, CMSA-C/C1/O35/37.

<sup>101</sup> J. Taylor to CMS, 20 January 1896, AL (1895): 541.

<sup>102</sup> Vincent to CMS, 10 January 1897, AL (1896): 637.

<sup>103</sup> Jervois Newnham to CMS, n.d., AL (1895): 538.

<sup>104</sup> McDonald to CMS, 30 June 1871, CMSA-C/C1/O45/56.

<sup>105</sup> McDonald Journal, 5 July 1867, CMSA-C/C1/O45/35.

other was literacy, something that became increasingly important because of the limited contact throughout the year between missionaries and their converts, with books viewed as the way in which converts could retain, develop and reflect upon their new beliefs in the wilderness environment.<sup>106</sup>

As evangelical Protestants, reading the bible was integral for the CMS' programme and teaching indigenous people to read in their own languages was an explicit aspect of organizational policy.<sup>107</sup> Placing value on the written word of God, missionaries introduced literacy at the mission house and encouraged and developed those skills through camp visits.<sup>108</sup> McDonald, for example, urged his converts to engage in scriptural study while out on the land, by providing them with bibles and other religious texts to take with them.<sup>109</sup> The Oblates similarly distributed books, but their theological stance towards sacramental worship made their biblical programme less aggressive; this was coupled with a belief prevalent in early modern France which viewed reading the bible as having the potential to take away from true faith.<sup>110</sup> Grandin was concerned that the use and distribution of bibles brought the Oblates too close to

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<sup>106</sup> Abel, *Drum Songs*, 114. For a similar perspective elsewhere, see: J.C. Parr, "A Missionary Library: Printed Attempts to Instruct the Maori, 1815-1845," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 70, no. 4 (1961): 431.

<sup>107</sup> Shenk, "Venn's Instructions," 474; CMS to Peck, May 1876, GSA-M56-1/VI-XXXVI-A.

<sup>108</sup> Peake, "Missionary Expansion," 52; Vincent to CMS, 9 June 1888, AL (1887): 376.

<sup>109</sup> Patrick Moore, "Archdeacon McDonald and Gwich'in Literacy," *Anthropological Linguistics* 49, no. 1 (2007): 27-28.

<sup>110</sup> Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (London: Routledge, 1989), 96.

their CMS counterparts, so specific Catholic translations of biblical texts were used.<sup>111</sup>

The Oblates also produced small religious texts, including books of hymns, prayers and devotions, with the CMS' programme encouraging the use of print on a larger scale than they otherwise might have done.<sup>112</sup>

The mission house was the site where these were distributed, and in some cases, where they were made. Although most books were printed in London, Montréal or Paris, Horden received a portable press at Moose Factory in 1853 and, likewise, several of the Oblate bishops received similar devices later in the century; Grouard was printing books at Lac la Biche in the late 1880s.<sup>113</sup> They printed both bibles and devotional books; Horden also printed an almanac so his converts would know which day was Sunday when they were away from the mission.<sup>114</sup> Not only were they integral from a spiritual perspective, but missionaries also viewed books as aspects of civilization because of the connection of printed books to technological progress.<sup>115</sup> These books were initially distributed from the mission house, with the house becoming a site of knowledge and devotion through literacy, connecting the interior Christian world of the house with the localized and moving Christian communities on the land. Similarly, the

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<sup>111</sup> Champagne, *Grandin*, 140.

<sup>112</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 89; Abel, *Drum Songs*, 118.

<sup>113</sup> Joyce M. Banks, "The Church Missionary Society Press at Moose Factory, 1853-1859," *JCHS* 26 (1984): 68-72; McCarthy, *Great River*, 81; Horden to Venn, 1 February 1860, CMSA-C/C1/O33/106; Grouard to Fabre, 16 June 1888, AD-GLPP-1786.

<sup>114</sup> Horden to Straith, 1 February 1854, CMSA-C/C1/O33/14A.

<sup>115</sup> Johnston, *Missionary Writing*, 123; Stanley, "Christianity and Civilization," 180; Horden to Venn, 7 January 1853, CMSA-C/C1/O33/10A.

house, as the



4.15: Library, Catholic Mission House, Dunvegan. *Author's photo*

nexus for learning, was also a site of knowledge through the presence of textual sources themselves, because of the libraries housed there on religious, and often secular, topics (fig.4.15).<sup>116</sup>

Literacy both encouraged personal devotion and assisted indigenous lay agents in leading services away from the mission and spreading Christianity to their own

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<sup>116</sup>Lecorre to "une bienfaitrice", n.d., *Missions* 24 (1889): 47; H.M. Stanley, "Mr. Mackay at Usambino," *CMG* 17 (1890): 128.

people.<sup>117</sup> Both the CMS and OMI made extensive use of lay agents to conduct services outside the mission using literacy and information learned at the mission house which could be practiced flexibly in any location.<sup>118</sup> The CMS made the most use of lay agents, because of the ease of doing so in evangelical practice for leading prayers or readings. McDonald, for example, relied heavily on people he called “Christian leaders”<sup>119</sup> to cover the vast territory and ensure spiritual provision and teaching for indigenous people away from the mission. The use of lay agents was an integral aspect of Venn’s “native church” policy, but it also built on the flexibility introduced in worship and teaching as practiced in early mission house space.<sup>120</sup>

Through this teaching, at and away from the mission, missionaries hoped that indigenous people on the land would enjoy the spiritual benefits of being Christians. However, conversion to Christianity was also seen to bring about something that missionaries saw as absent in indigenous society and that fulfilled a very clear temporal want: happiness. Both Protestant and Catholic missionaries believed that Christians were happier and more fulfilled than their non-Christian counterparts because of the knowledge of God.<sup>121</sup> At the same time, they also recognized that indigenous people

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<sup>117</sup> Karen Evans, “Edmund James Peck: His Contribution to Eskimo Literacy and Publishing,” *JCHS* 26 (1984): 63.

<sup>118</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 97; Moore, “McDonald,” 34; George Winter to CMS, 3 December 1888, *AL* (1888): 8.

<sup>119</sup> McDonald to CMS, 4 February 1888, *AL* (1888): 3.

<sup>120</sup> Williams, “Not Transplanting,” 156.

<sup>121</sup> McDonald Journal, 5 June 1875, CMSA-C/C1/O45/45; Auguste Lecorre to Faraud, 1 August 1881, AD-GLPPC-19.

could not be happy in a situation where they were unable to provide for their families, an extension of the idea of self-help as a fundamental aspect of being a Christian. Petitot explicitly wrote that indigenous people were happiest as Christians on the land, and a general understanding grew in the northern missions that settlement, leading to disease and starvation, would not make indigenous people better Christians.<sup>122</sup> However, the concern remained that the wilderness would make people engage in non-Christian behaviour and slip back into “heathen” ways.<sup>123</sup> The mission house, as a site for conversion but also as an indicator of Christian presence, provided an initial nexus for the retention of belief, reinforcing the strength of the Christian world in dichotomy to the wilderness; indigenous Christians lived within the pre-Christian environment and yet were separate from it through the beliefs taught and reinforced through the mission station and its initial structure, the house.

### *Changing Customs*

Certainly, by the 1860s, missionaries had accepted that indigenous people could become Christians without significant economic changes; they did, however, expect indigenous people to make other cultural changes, particularly surrounding morality, where missionaries considered indigenous culture incompatible with core areas of

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<sup>122</sup> Petitot, *Dènè-Dindjié*, 43; den Otter, *Wilderness*, 187.

<sup>123</sup> Nash, *Wilderness*, 29.

Christian belief.<sup>124</sup> These were issues such as infanticide and killing, ideas around work, leisure and contemplation, and sexual and family values, where missionaries saw traditional indigenous practice as counter to Christianity. Success of a mission was often gauged by improvement in morality and adherence to Christian codes of behaviour in these areas.<sup>125</sup> Many of these put the convert's soul in jeopardy, meaning that salvation called for the dismantling of indigenous societal norms when they came in conflict with standards of Christian morality and behaviour.<sup>126</sup>

Some of these changes could be enacted through the mission house.<sup>127</sup> Some of the most visible of these were ideas surrounding health and hygiene which were viewed as temporally and spiritually important, and directly related to indigenous behaviour. Missionaries generally found indigenous people unclean; Newnham, for example, described the Inuit as "filthy."<sup>128</sup> At the same time, European diseases, such as small pox, tuberculosis and influenza, were decimating indigenous populations. Both of these things were linked to spirituality, with missionaries believing health and wellbeing to be linked to faith, despite a simultaneously secular understanding of illness as a physical problem which could be rectified with modern medicine. It was believed these issues could be rectified through practical measures, including dispensing medicine, and

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<sup>124</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 110; Huel, "Strategy," 251.

<sup>125</sup> Spendlove to CMS, 12 August 1893, *AL* (1892): 420.

<sup>126</sup> Philip Goldring, "Religion, Mission and Native Culture," *JCHS* 26, no. 2 (1984): 47.

<sup>127</sup> Etterington, "Architecture as Order," 7.

<sup>128</sup> Newnham to CMS, n.d., *AL* (1895): 538.



spiritual growth, with missionaries believing that health and virtue were interrelated.

They also believed health was reflective of spatial orientation, and it was hard to maintain hygiene and virtue in a wilderness environment, making the mission house central in encouraging hygienic practice and preventing and alleviating sickness alongside spiritual instruction by providing an example and a place for teaching about these issues.<sup>129</sup>

Until the later construction of convents and hospitals, the mission house was the primary site for medical advice and missionaries regularly dispensed medicines and provided assistance, although many were not trained in this area until the later part of the century.<sup>130</sup> Although not universally accepted as helpful, most missionaries kept homeopathic medical kits in the house; this, combined with prayer and visiting of the sick, was the primary form of medical aid they could provide, and was relied upon quite heavily.<sup>131</sup> Some of the Oblates also provided vaccinations in an attempt to forestall outbreaks of disease in the far north, brought into the region through the HBC boat brigades.<sup>132</sup> Medical aid was noted by Spendlove at Fort Resolution to be “a most useful handmaid of the Gospel”<sup>133</sup> for its ability to give a positive impression of the

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<sup>129</sup> Driver, “Moral Geographies,” 277-78.

<sup>130</sup> Missionaries the 1880s and 1890s, sometimes had formal medical training, including James Lucas at Fort Chipewyan. Lucas to CMS, 23 August 1892, *AL* (1892): 178.

<sup>131</sup> Hunt Journal, September 1860, CMSA-C/C1/O34/70.

<sup>132</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 126; Vincent McNally, *The Lord’s Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), 76-78.

<sup>133</sup> Spendlove to CMS, 20 July 1891, *Letters* (1891): 136.

missionaries and bring people into the mission.<sup>134</sup> Medicine, therefore, was an invaluable aid for evangelism, both in alleviating temporal suffering and drawing indigenous people into the mission house for instruction.<sup>135</sup>

Although disease itself was seen as an indicator of moral transgression, medical aid itself did not directly provide moral teachings. Where medicine and morality did overlap was with regards to hygiene. During the nineteenth century, cleanliness was explicitly related to moral purity and a lack of hygiene was seen as an indicator of an unclean soul.<sup>136</sup>

Although the CMS was more explicit about this, both groups encouraged the development of hygienic practices to help prevent disease and raise indigenous people's spiritual and moral state; this included personal washing as well as proper sanitation in camps and around the posts.<sup>137</sup> Many missionaries gave out soap to converts, encouraging them to use it particularly before coming to a worship service so that their skin would be as clean as their hearts hopefully were, with exterior appearance intended to reflect inner spirituality.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 125; Faraud to Cox, 18 November 1868, AD-HPF4191.L75-R36; Bompas to CMS, 9 December 1867, CMSA-C/C1/O10/8.

<sup>135</sup> Lucas to CMS, 29 August 1895, *AL* (1895): 567.

<sup>136</sup> Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 44-47; Markku Hokkanen, "Moral Transgressions, Disease and Holistic Health in the Livingstonia Mission in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Malawi," *Asclepio: Revista Historia de la Medicina y de la Ciencia* 61, no. 1 (2009): 247; Thomas Jabez Marsh to CMS, 5 December 1895, *AL* (1895): 650.

<sup>137</sup> Vale to CMS, 21 December 1909, *AL* (1909): 616; Petitot, *Dènè-Dindjié*, 43.

<sup>138</sup> Lewis, *E.J. Peck*, 239.

Cleanliness was also explicitly linked to spatial concerns, with non-Christian environments, including both nature and the HBC post viewed as unclean.<sup>139</sup> Indigenous people and dwellings were consistently described as dirty.<sup>140</sup> When viewed in relation to Christian understanding of cleanliness, dirty space indicated a lack of moral purity. By contrast, mission house, as a public example of a clean, Christian home, demonstrated faith and morality was intended as a lesson for indigenous people, encouraging them to keep both their homes and persons clean as an extension of Christian belief.<sup>141</sup>

However, the most important aspect of indigenous life on which missionaries hoped to enact change through the mission house was the family.<sup>142</sup> Missionaries were concerned about the structure of the family in indigenous society, seeing polygamous relationships as unfair to women, undermining acceptable gender roles and the nuclear family, and in contradiction to Christian belief.<sup>143</sup> The sacramental nature of marriage in Catholicism and its theological importance within the Anglican Church made this issue directly applicable to religious change. It was also an aspect of indigenous culture which was public and functioned as part of larger societal systems, and to change it was to change

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<sup>139</sup> Driver, "Moral Geographies," 280-81; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 242.

<sup>140</sup> McDonald Journal, 19 January 1867, CMSA-C/C1/O45/35; Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 275. See also: Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 286.

<sup>141</sup> Émile Petitot, *Exploration de la région du Grand Lac des Ours* (Paris: Téqui, 1893), 330.

<sup>142</sup> McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan*, 124.

<sup>143</sup> Petitot, *Dènè-Dindjié*, 34-35.

familial and community relationships in ways that went beyond conversion, making marriage a key area of conflict between missionaries and indigenous people.<sup>144</sup>

In his memoir of his northern work, Faraud wrote of the Dene: “the vice that was the greatest obstacle to their regeneration, it is polygamy.”<sup>145</sup> Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries worked hard to encourage indigenous people to enter into monogamous marriages, although this was difficult in societies, not just in the north, where polygamous unions provided important societal and economic functions.<sup>146</sup>

Monogamous marriage was seen as the basis of a civil society and also the framework upon which the Christian nuclear family was built; polygamy directly contravened this acceptable moral norm. Similarly, missionaries were concerned about other issues related to sexuality, including sex outside lawful, Christian unions, as well as unions between relatives.<sup>147</sup> Marriage within the church could rectify these moral issues by sanctioning only acceptable unions. However, this was disruptive to traditional indigenous family structure and to the important economic and social role of marriage in the fur trade, causing conflict as missionaries exerted control over an aspect of life

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<sup>144</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 90.

<sup>145</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 283. “...le vice qui a été le plus grand obstacle à leur regeneration, c’est la polygamie.”

<sup>146</sup> Todd, *African Missions*, 186; Langmore, “Christian Home,” 87-93.

<sup>147</sup> Holmes to CMS, 30 December 1895, *AL* (1895): 568; Ducot to Faraud, 6 June 1880, AD-GLPPC-7.

previously accepted to be either performed civilly by Chief Factors, who legally had that authority, or to remain à la façon du pays.<sup>148</sup>

Missionaries viewed polygamous unions as victimizing women and as a subversion of Christian gender roles.<sup>149</sup> In nineteenth-century Europe, the nuclear family, gendered in relation to labour, childrearing and public life, was viewed as a vital building block of civilized, Christian society and missionaries desired to inculcate their converts with these ideas and change their family structure.<sup>150</sup> The nuclear family was viewed as having an extremely important role, particularly Christian mothers who could pass on Christian values to their children and, by extension, society at large.<sup>151</sup> The nuclear family was also the safeguard of morality, discouraging extra- and pre-marital sex by placing sexuality within its correct sphere and subduing the perceived sexual immorality of indigenous women, saving them from sin.<sup>152</sup>

The Christian nuclear family was headed by the husband and father who worked outside the home with his wife in submission to him, looking after the home and the children

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<sup>148</sup> Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Native Women in the Creation of Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1830," in *The Women's West*, ed. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 55.

<sup>149</sup> Labode, "Heathen Krall," 128.

<sup>150</sup> Fiona Bowie, "The Elusive Christian Family: Missionary Attempts to Define Women's Role. Case Studies from Cameroon," in *Women and Missions: Past and Present*, ed. Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener (Providence: Berg, 1993), 145; Joan Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (London: Croon Helm, 1980), 30-33.

<sup>151</sup> Usher, "Social Theory," 49.

<sup>152</sup> Michelle Perrot, "The Family Triumphant," in *A History of Private Life*, ed. Michelle Perrot, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 4:100; Gibson, *French Catholicism*, 92; Strayer, *Mission Communities*, 79; Neylan, *Heavens*, 109.

and not participating in heavy labour.<sup>153</sup> In traditional indigenous life, men participated in trade and hunting, the latter of which was not necessarily considered work, and women participated in childrearing as well as the heavy labour moving camp and preparing food and hides which missionaries saw as unnatural, without understanding hunting-based culture.<sup>154</sup> Particularly, missionaries wanted men to take on some of their wives' jobs that they viewed as men's work, such as moving camp, which would, in turn, raise the status of women within society through respect, affection and attention, including monogamy.<sup>155</sup> Missionaries also believed that women held a better position in a Christian family through entry into the church by baptism and marriage.<sup>156</sup> Women were also intended to change their characteristics, with missionaries encouraging modesty, sweetness and submission as the traits of a good, Christian wife.<sup>157</sup> Petitot wrote of the Dene that: "Religion alone was able to rebuild the family amongst them"<sup>158</sup> with the hope that through Catholic marriage, the Christian family as the nucleus of society would support the growth of a community based on the moral and social norms of European Christianity.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Gibson, *French Catholicism*, 186-87; Deborah Gaitskill, "Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in South Africa," *The Journal of African History* 24, no. 2 (1983): 241-42.

<sup>154</sup> Taché, *Ésquisse*, 103; Joseph Lofthouse, *A Thousand Miles from a Post Office, or, Twenty Years' Life and Travel in the Hudson's Bay Regions* (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada, 19), 164-65.

<sup>155</sup> Faraut, *Dix-Huit*, 284; McCarthy, "Theory," 251-52; Champagne, *Grandin*, 79.

<sup>156</sup> Émile Petitot, *On route pour la mer glaciale* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1887), 377-78.

<sup>157</sup> Petitot, *La mer*, 161-62.

<sup>158</sup> Petitot, *Dènè-Dindjié*, 35. "La religion seule a pu reconstituer chez eux la famille."

<sup>159</sup> Middleton, "Cult of Domesticity," 152.

Missionaries' stance on marriage became more complicated when people already in polygamous unions, particularly with children, wanted to enter the church. The understanding was that converted men would have to choose a wife and enter into church-sanctioned marriage.<sup>160</sup> However, some missionaries from both organization, specifically McDonald and Ducot, voiced concern, afraid that it would both turn people away from the church and cause tribal breakdown. Both Ducot and McDonald suggested that people in pre-existing polygamous marriages could still be Christians and retain their marital arrangements particularly if there were children involved, a suggestion already made, and rejected, in some other mission fields where polygamy was a major hurdle to conversion.<sup>161</sup> Ducot wrote to Faraud of two sisters married to the same non-Christian man who wanted to be received into the Church but were concerned about being separated, not from their husband, but from each other. He appealed to history, noting: "It would appear from history that certain Roman emperors had multiple wives simultaneously, amongst whom were some excellent Christian women, some of whom perished as martyrs,"<sup>162</sup> suggesting that this arrangement could foster church growth and was appropriate in light of the apostolic association of northern missions.

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<sup>160</sup> McDonald Journal, 3 July 1868, CMSA-C/C1/O45/38

<sup>161</sup> Strayer, *Mission Communities*, 79; Peake, "McDonald," 64.

<sup>162</sup> Ducot to Faraud, 16 August 1886, AD-GLPPC-7. "C'est qu'il paraîtrait d'après l'histoire que certaines empereurs romains qui avaient tant d'épouses simultanés comptaient parmi elles parfois d'excellentes chrétiennes dont quelques unes périrent martyrs."

Ducot's sanguine view of pre-Christian marital arrangements was not the prevailing orthodoxy and both Catholic and Protestant missionaries insisted on acceptance of the monogamous nuclear family as part of conversion, shedding old ways for a new Christian societal order.<sup>163</sup> Church-administered marriage allowed refusal based on immorality, including polygamy.<sup>164</sup> Missionaries preached the idea of monogamous marriage as they travelled to indigenous camps, but the mission house was the primary setting for these moral teachings because it was through the mission house that ideas about both family and sexuality could be demonstrated in a public diorama of the model Christian life.<sup>165</sup>

Demonstrating the monogamous Christian family was easier for CMS missionaries than their Catholic counterparts. The CMS mission house was fundamentally a gendered space, the realm of the missionary wife who kept the "domestic hearth."<sup>166</sup> One of the primary functions of the home was to demonstrate the role of the wife in both the home and the family. Her role was that of mother, wife and homemaker and was intended to demonstrate to indigenous people the core values of the nuclear family and the sacredness of domestic life within the Christian worldview.<sup>167</sup> Missionaries believed that demonstration was the most effective mode of teaching these moral aspects of

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<sup>163</sup> Christophers, *Positioning*, 120-25.

<sup>164</sup> Champagne, *Grandin*, 142.

<sup>165</sup> Bompas, "The Esquimaux of Mackenzie River," CMSA-C/C1/O10/39.

<sup>166</sup> Bompas to Wright, 6 October 1877, CMSA-C/C1/O/2A/21.

<sup>167</sup> Rutherdale, *White Man's God*, 88-91; Middleton, "Domesticity," 149; Roberts, "Christian Home," 134-37.



Christian life and the home provided a space to showcase the role of the Christian women and enact significant societal change in indigenous communities.<sup>168</sup> Most missionaries believed that the key to building a Christian society was through Christian home life and a mother's influence.<sup>169</sup> It was the missionary wife's role, within the home, to guide indigenous women such that they too could raise their family in a Christian environment and bring the next generation up within the church, as it was believed that "there is no surer foundation than the training up of Christian mothers."<sup>170</sup>

In the house, the mission couple modelled the monogamous relationship expected of indigenous Christians, where the man was the head of the household but the woman was the keeper of the home.<sup>171</sup> Through the lens of the building, missionaries could also demonstrate the expected spheres of labour for men and women, where the man worked outside the home engaging in the "real" missionary work, evangelizing, teaching and doing physical labour, and the woman worked within the home, cooking, cleaning and looking after children.<sup>172</sup> This was both a demonstration of prevailing European family values and an implicit criticism of indigenous home life which was viewed as morally lacking.<sup>173</sup> The mission house and family provided a Protestant view of the

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<sup>168</sup> Jocelyn Murray, "The Role of Women in the Church Missionary Society, 1799-1917," in *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity*, 69; Rutherford, *White Man*, 97-99.

<sup>169</sup> Middleton, "Domesticity," 152; Gaitskill, "Domesticity," 241-2; Labode, "Heathens Krall," 128.

<sup>170</sup> CMS to Cowley, 6 June 1850, CMSA-C/C1/L.2.

<sup>171</sup> Hovland, *Mission Station*, 179; Johnston, *Missionary Writing*, 52-53.

<sup>172</sup> Skeie, *God's Kingdom*, 76.

<sup>173</sup> [Mason], "A Short Sketch of the Life and Missionary Labour and Happy Death of Sophia Mason," *CMG* 11 (1861): 137. See also: Roberts, "Christian Home," 141.



**4.16:** Dining Room and Library, CMS Mission House at Churchill, c.1893. *University of Toronto, J.B. Tyrell Barren Lands Collection, P10541*

household which it was hoped that indigenous people would emulate. Ideas such as cleanliness were introduced through the maintenance of hygienic standards as were ideas about order, civility and taste through Victorian decoration (fig. 4.16) such as the Wallis' house at Rampart House, decorated with "carpet, papering on the walls, pictures, organ and merry little nick-nacks."<sup>174</sup> In the home, the wife could also demonstrate and teach domestic skills, such as sewing and knitting, which missionaries believed indigenous women might be able to use.<sup>175</sup> These skills, alongside the moral and societal

<sup>174</sup> Isaac Stringer to parents, 3 April 1893, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1. See also: Skeie, *God's Kingdom*, 89; Langmore, "Christian Home," 85.

<sup>175</sup> Thomas Canham to CMS, August 1891, AL (1891): 13; See also: Middleton, "Domesticity," 155.

values demonstrated through the monogamous Christian family, were inculcated explicitly through the mission house as a didactic space.

Missionary wives also functioned in roles other than homemaker, undertakingsometimes unrecognized, and always unpaid, evangelical and teaching work alongside their husbands.<sup>176</sup>Wives were seen as valuable workers within the mission to reach out to and teach indigenous women to whom they were seen to have more access.<sup>177</sup>This was not a role that northern missionaries took for granted, however. For example, William Spendlove at Fort Resolution made no secret of his reliance on his wife to engage with indigenous women.<sup>178</sup>This was a role that the CMS also recognized. For example, Elizabeth Horden was explicitly charged with the teaching and evangelism of indigenous women and girls.<sup>179</sup>Nursing was also something that missionary wives participated in, especially in the later decades of the century when some partook in nursing training in preparation for their work.<sup>180</sup> Women were expected to perform this often unsaid role and much of it took place within the home, extending the church to women through women and within the domestic sphere created by the mission house.

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<sup>176</sup> Rutherford, *White Man*, 51.

<sup>177</sup> Sadie Stringer, 25 January 1898, GSA-M74-3/2A; Selina Bompas Journal, 24 February 1874, in Selina Bompas, *A Heroine of the North: Memoirs of Selina Bompas*, ed. S.A. Archer (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, 1929), 41; Peck, 27 August 1886, *AL* (1886): 6; Abel, *Drum Songs*, 134-35.

<sup>178</sup> Spendlove to Fenn, 24 July 1890, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1890/205.

<sup>179</sup> Venn and Straith, Instructions of the Committee to Mr. John Horden and Mrs. Horden, CMSA-C/C1/L.2.

<sup>180</sup> Young to CMS, February 1900, *AL* (1899): 700.

This was the role expected of Protestant missionary wives across the global mission field in the nineteenth century. In the north, however, there were few women, as a number of the CMS' missionaries, certainly initially, were single and there were virtually no single female missionaries until the 1890s. Furthermore, it was believed that women were unsuited to northern mission work. After his consecration as Bishop of Athabasca in 1874, Bompas married his cousin Selina Cox and brought her to the north. She was commended as being intelligent, educated, and the model of a bishop's wife, assisting with female ministry and looking after children in her home.<sup>181</sup> Nevertheless, Bompas wrote:

There is no doubt that the domestic hearth where it may be had will convey Christian lessons to the Indians, but the frequent itineracy to which I seem called made me hesitate much in bringing Mrs. Bompas to the north...though a married Protestant ministry according to the Scripture rule seems specially desirable in the presence of the boasted celibacy of the Romish priesthood, yet I think it may sometimes be a gain to the missionary cause where a missionary is able to forsake wife as well as home for the gospel's sake.<sup>182</sup>

Bompas believed that domesticity embodied by women in the home was important for the inculcation of Christian values, but was simultaneously concerned about "the inconveniences suffered here by a lady from home"<sup>183</sup> because of the potential for ill-health to compel them, and their husbands, to return home. He believed the properly appointed mission home was almost impossible to maintain to an English standard, as

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<sup>181</sup> William Ridley, "Letters from Bishop Ridley," *CMI* 29 (1904): 183; Selina Bompas to her sister, 28 October 1874, in *Heroine*, 29.

<sup>182</sup> Bompas to CMS, n.d., in Peake, "Expansion," 93.

<sup>183</sup> Bompas to CMS, 22 November 1876, CMSA-C/C1/O/2A/15.

was demonstrating family life when missionary men were absent itinerating.<sup>184</sup> Above all, he believed that “a family greatly interferes with a Missionary’s activity in this rigorous land.”<sup>185</sup> It was, in his impression, a landscape where flexibility in structure was imperative and “the domestic must yield to the missionary.”<sup>186</sup>

That Bompas travelled extensively contextualizes his remarks but he was not the only person to suggest that the north was unsuitable for women and the domestic home. The HBC was also not enthusiastic about white women in the north, seeing English women as having unrealistically high standards of how life in the north should be conducted.<sup>187</sup> Many missionaries also saw the north as too punishing a climate for women’s “frail” compositions.<sup>188</sup> Kirkby even went to far as to say it was a field better suited to celibacy and was very clear that it was unsuitable for family life.<sup>189</sup> After his first journey to Peel River, Kirkby wrote enthusiastically of the Gwich’in to the CMS; however, he also noted: “Gladly, would I, if not for my family, live permanently among them. They require a single man to be their missionary.”<sup>190</sup> Clearly, non-indigenous women and children were fully capable of surviving in the north. But Kirkby and Bompas viewed the north in light of its romantic expression as the realm of the lone, heroic male

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<sup>184</sup>Bompas to Wright, 6 October 1877, CMSA-C/C1/O/2A/21.

<sup>185</sup>Bompas to CMS, 22 November 1876, CMSA-C/C1/O/2A/15.

<sup>186</sup>Bompas to Wright, November 1878, CMSA-C/C1/O2A/31.

<sup>187</sup> Colville to Archibald Barclay, 12 December 1851, in *Inward Correspondence*, 81; Long, “Company Families,” 43.

<sup>188</sup>Lofthouse, *Thousand Miles*, 183.

<sup>189</sup> Kirkby to Chapman, 6 June 1860, CMSA-C/C1/O39/87; Vance, *Sinews*, 37.

<sup>190</sup> “Tidings from the Youcon,” *CMI* 3 (1867): 144.

missionary.<sup>191</sup> Despite the focus on morality and the family, ironically, the domestic home, exemplified by the missionary wife, was in stark contrast the romantic role of the male missionary in the northern field, meaning that the domestic implications of the home were not always fully realized, creating a somewhat confusing picture of what the home was communicating.<sup>192</sup> Issues surrounding the role of women as the keepers of domestic values were compounded by the fact that northern missionary wives also participated in labours that were not within the traditional female sphere.<sup>193</sup> Betsy Lofthouse, for example, built the mission house at Churchill alongside her husband, contradicting the very values which that building exemplified.<sup>194</sup>

The question of English wives in the north was, for some, solved by marrying indigenous and mixed-race women. For the CMS, this was effectively a prohibited practice, reflecting the belief that indigenous women were sexually immoral and could not create an appropriate Christian home.<sup>195</sup> However, when Robert McDonald married Julia Kutug, a Gwich'in woman, in 1876, little was said.<sup>196</sup> That McDonald was himself mixed-race

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<sup>191</sup> William Van Reyk, "Christian Ideals of Manliness in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 4 (2009): 1054; Vance, *Sinews*, 8; Rutherford, *White Man*, 10-12.

<sup>192</sup> Bompas to CMS, 24 December 1883, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1884/151.

<sup>193</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:285.

<sup>194</sup> Lofthouse, *Thousand Miles*, 59-60.

<sup>195</sup> Murray, "Role of Women," 69; Cox, *Missionary Enterprise*, 108; Angela Wanhalla "The Natives Uncivilize Me': Missionaries and Interracial Intimacy in Early New Zealand," in *Missionaries, Indigenous People and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Patricia Grimshaw and Andrew May (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 24-25.

<sup>196</sup> There was only question as to the validity of the marriage because McDonald performed it himself. Derek Whitehouse-Strong, "'Because I Happen to be a Native Clergyman': The Impact of Race, Ethnicity, Status and Gender on Native Agents of the Church Missionary Society in the Nineteenth-Century Canadian Northwest," (PhD Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2004), 123.

was probably a factor, but William Mason and Benjamin Totty, both English, married mixed-race women, with similar lack of consequence. Totty's 1895 marriage to Selima Mayo was sanctioned by Bompas who, although initially disapproving of the match, defended it to the CMS noting "the influence of a country-born wife is greatly in favour of retaining a man in this country, whereas an English wife has been often a cause of his leaving it,"<sup>197</sup> concerned first and foremost with keeping his staff.<sup>198</sup> Bompas was not the only colonial bishop who found finding acceptable and willing candidates difficult, but, in the Yukon where Totty was stationed, the situation was particularly acute.<sup>199</sup>

Julia McDonald, Selima Totty and Sophia Mason all took on the role of mission wife, fulfilling necessary domestic roles, regardless of race; for example, William Mason wrote of his wife's qualities in regards to "Christian conduct", piety and the keeping of the household, "enforcing order and cleanliness in others, [and] her own house was a constant lesson to the eyes of all around."<sup>200</sup> Indigenous and mixed-race wives also provided benefits that an English wife could not, including familiarity with indigenous languages; Mason noted that his Cree bible translation was partly, if not mostly, completed by his wife.<sup>201</sup> She also provided an important link between the mission and

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<sup>197</sup> Bompas to Baring-Gould, 13 January 1896, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1896/58.

<sup>198</sup> Coates, "Rise a Peg," 6-7.

<sup>199</sup> See for example: Joseph Hardwick, "Anglican Church Expansion and the Recruitment of Colonial Clergy for New South Wales and the Cape Colony," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 3 (2009): 370-372.

<sup>200</sup> [Mason], "Sophia," 137.

<sup>201</sup> [Mason], "Sophia," 138; Bompas to Baring-Gould, 13 January 1896, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1896/58; Peake, "McDonald," 69.

the local indigenous community, meeting with native women and teaching their children.<sup>202</sup> Through these activities, wives like Sophia Mason built and maintained fur trade and indigenous family networks by integrating their husbands into the existing social structure of the territory, providing a mediator between the missionary and HBC-indigenous world through domestic space.<sup>203</sup> Julia McDonald, certainly, used her role within the Gwich'in community to bring people into the Anglican mission; she also trapped and foraged for her family which was unfeminine but also necessary.<sup>204</sup> Indigenous and mixed race wives were still viewed as not ideal for demonstrating how Christian women should live because of the inherent immorality. Europeans saw indigenous society and the characteristics they possessed were both more useful and less domestic than many of their British counterparts, but still fulfilling a necessary role.<sup>205</sup> As Mason noted, even in the somewhat compromised conditions of the north, the house and the missionary wife remained at the heart of domestic values, providing a didactic lesson to indigenous people on morality and the family.

The Oblates no less valued the domestic home and family but were clearly unable to model it; the issue of how to reinforce domestic and sexual values in which they did not personally participate was problematic when trying to impose new familial structures on

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<sup>202</sup> Mason Journal, 13 April 1856, CMSA-C/C1/O42/57.

<sup>203</sup> Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 177.

<sup>204</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 52; Susan Sleeper-Smith, "Women, Kin and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade," *Ethnohistory* 47, no. 2 (2000): 423-52.

<sup>205</sup> Whitehouse-Strong, "Native Agents," 292.



indigenous communities.<sup>206</sup> The Christian family home could only be preached, taught and encouraged, by both the Oblates and, when they became established, the Grey Nuns, whose purpose in the north served partly to provide indigenous people with what Grandin called “education in family living,”<sup>207</sup> through work with girls to be trained as wives and mothers for Catholic families and communities.<sup>208</sup> The priests, like the CMS, saw women as integral to Christian society but were also aware that they, as men, were less successful than their female counterparts in reaching them.<sup>209</sup> The Grey Nuns, however, worked primarily through the institutional structures of convents, schools and hospitals, outside of the domestic setting of the mission house.

However, the house still served a purpose in the understanding of family and sexual propriety. The Catholic missions provided a different model for indigenous people which underlined the differences in sexual conduct between lay people and religious professionals, both of whom were expected to adhere to code of sexual propriety, although these codes were different.<sup>210</sup> On one hand, the domestic arrangement of the Oblates exalted the religious profession, setting the ordained and lay communities within a hierarchy defined by marital arrangement. It was believed that celibacy

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<sup>206</sup> Bowie, “Christian Family,” 159.

<sup>207</sup> Grandin “Les missions sauvages,” *Missions* 21 (1883): 128. “...l’éducation de la famille...”

<sup>208</sup> Robert Carney, “The Grey Nuns and the Children of Holy Angels: Fort Chipewyan 1874-1924,” in *Proceedings of the Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion Bicentennial Conference*, ed. P.A. McCormack and R. Geoffray Ironside (Edmonton: Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, 1990), 291; Shorter, *Cross and Flag*, 182.

<sup>209</sup> Grouard to Cox, 3 December 1872, AD-HPF4191.C750-134.

<sup>210</sup> Langmore, “Civilized Home,” 85.

garnered respect from indigenous people which, in turn, translated into conversion.<sup>211</sup> Grandin noted, for example, that Kirkby was seen “not as a man of God”<sup>212</sup> by the Dene because he had a wife. The Oblates demonstrated and taught the importance of Catholic sexual norms to indigenous people, where priests were celibate and church members were within church-sanctioned marriage, each in a holy relationship, ordained by God.

At the same time, the hierarchical structure of the Oblate community, demonstrated through living arrangements within the home, echoed the structure of both the church and nuclear family. It was widely understood that the hierarchy of the family was reflected in the hierarchy of the church, with a father at the head and his family under his care and guidance.<sup>213</sup> The structure of the Oblate community functioned likewise, with the bishop at the head and the priests and brothers under him, building a Catholic community and family for indigenous converts to observe. This community was seen to develop within the house, where roles were made clear through the division of labour, particularly between priests and brothers, as well as spatial arrangements that reflected church hierarchy, such as the creation of a separate space for the bishop or mission superior.<sup>214</sup> It was hoped that indigenous people would recognize this multifaceted understanding of church, family, hierarchy and sexuality as presented by the

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<sup>211</sup> Peake, “Missionary Expansion,” 89.

<sup>212</sup> Grandin Journal, 1 August 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 226-27. “...non comme l’homme de Dieu.”

<sup>213</sup> Middleton, “Cult of Domesticity,” 164; Johnston, *Missionary Writing*, 51.

<sup>214</sup> Lecorre to Faraud, 2 December 1880, AD-GLPPC-19.

arrangement of Oblates houses and apply it to their own lives, although this was by far a more abstract, if no less important, demonstration, centring once again on activities within the home.

Morality was demonstrated through activities in the home, but also on an architectural level through the internal division of the home into public and private space. While mission houses were fundamentally open spaces where indigenous people, both Christian and not, could engage with and observe the missionaries, they also contained a hierarchy of space which alluded to standards of morality, civilization and faith, particularly in contrast to indigenous dwellings. Although indigenous Christians were viewed as capable of remaining faithful within their traditional dwellings, these structures were nevertheless judged based on their connection to ideas of pre-Christian wilderness and their division of internal space.

A central observation made by missionaries of indigenous dwellings was their tendency to be a single large space where everyone lived; although this was not always the case, the one-room wigwam was the stereotyped expectation of North American indigenous architecture and missionaries often saw what they wanted to see in indigenous structures.<sup>215</sup> Indigenous dwellings were viewed as extensions of the wilderness, both because of their conscious and evident use of natural materials and non-rectilinear

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<sup>215</sup> Bompas to Fenn, 2 February 1867, CMSA-C/C1/O10/6; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:283-84.

forms, and because of a lack of internal division of space; many missionaries felt this arrangement was reflective of “a mere animal existence”<sup>216</sup> because interior space was not divided rationally by function. Similarly, indigenous dwellings were also seen as an extension of the non-Christian, wilderness lifestyle because of the perceived potential for sinful behaviour, sexual impropriety and unclear family relations.<sup>217</sup> Although it was unlikely that indigenous people would move into European-style houses, it was still hoped for, and the mission house provided a model of propriety for how internal space should be divided. Ducot wrote to Faraud in 1882 from Fort Norman, reflecting on the need to differentiate between public and private spaces within the mission house, at a time when a house-chapel was the only building at the Fort Norman mission, which could be achieved through the interior partitioning of the building.<sup>218</sup>

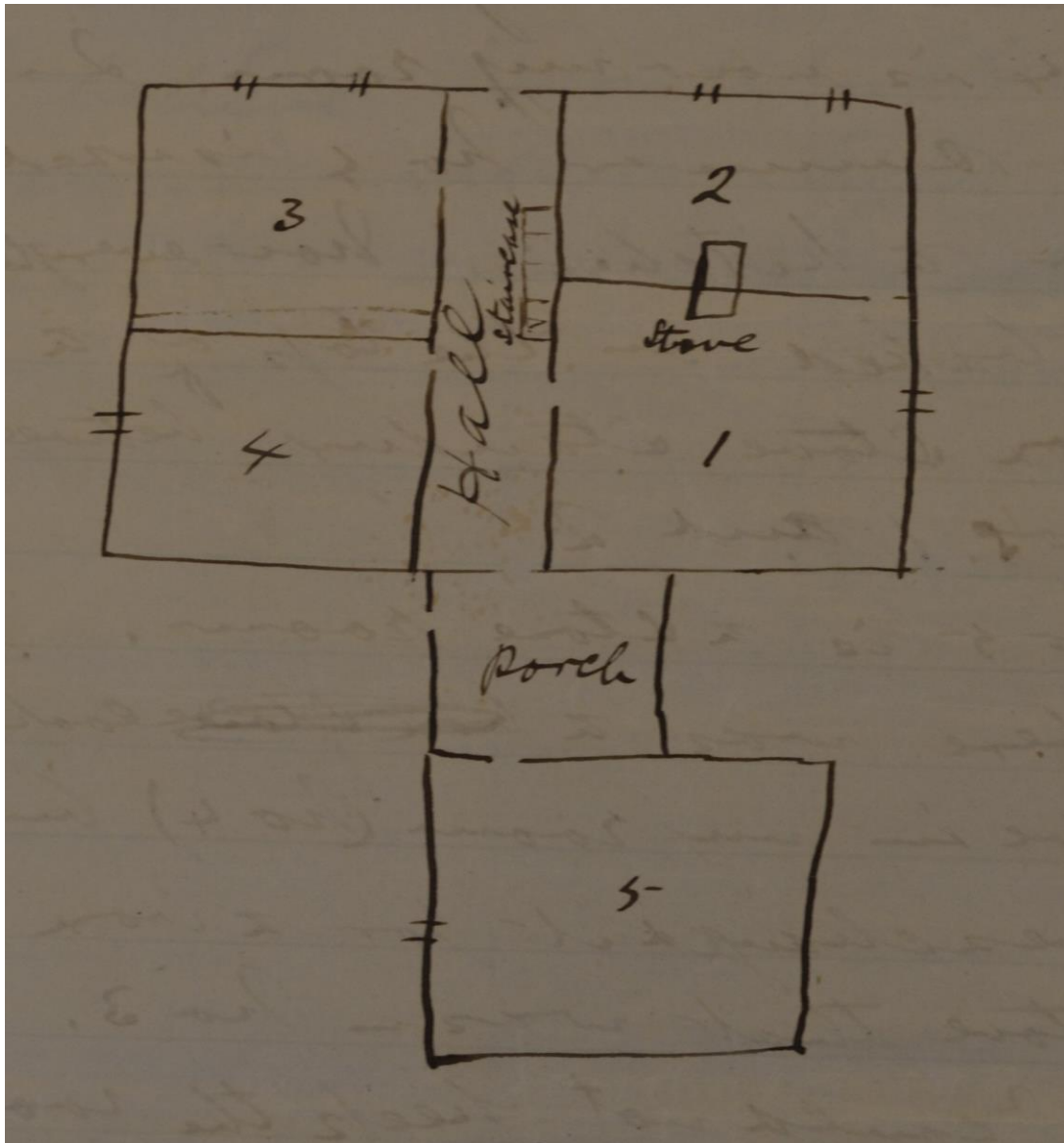
For the Oblates, it was integral that the house be divided into space based on its function as well as its role as a public or private area. Duchaussois, noted that the key areas within the mission house were the private space, the bedrooms, and the public

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<sup>216</sup> Kirkby to CMS, 10 November 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/20.

<sup>217</sup> Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2: 277.

<sup>218</sup> Ducot to Faraud, 26 August 1882, AD-GLPPC-7; Ducot to Faraud, 23 November 1882, AD-GLPPC-7.



**4.17:** Mission House, Peel River, drawing by Isaac Stringer, 1893. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, M74-3/1-A-1*

space, the chapel, kitchen and *salle*.<sup>219</sup> These divisions also applied in CMS mission houses, although without the separate chapel. A drawing of the mission house at Peel River by Stringer in 1893 (fig.4.17) shows the division of the rooms within the house: a

<sup>219</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 121.

main parlour and study, the McDonalds' bedroom, and three other rooms used flexibly as a kitchen, storage space and second bedroom.<sup>220</sup> Within a building that was effectively open to the public at all times, these separated spaces based on usage, created space for the missionary alone and allowed for indigenous people to come and go in the public rooms. When contrasted to indigenous buildings, it further reinforced the divide between the Christian house and the outside wilderness through the creation of ordered interior space reflective of usage, as well as reinforcing the values and beliefs that the missionaries wanted to introduce.<sup>221</sup> It made little matter that they did not expect indigenous people to immediately adopt this mode of construction; the house and its interior served to show the morality in ordered and divided internal layout based on function.<sup>222</sup> The partitioning of space was important enough that it was often done even temporarily. At the CMS mission station at Wapuskaw (Wabasca) with not enough timber to complete the interior walls, Weaver created a division downstairs in the public rooms with the timber he had and used sheets to divide the upper storey into bedrooms for the family, to establish demarcated space for specific functions.<sup>223</sup> An image of the house on Herschel Island from the late 1890s shows temporary partitioning in action (fig. 4.18).

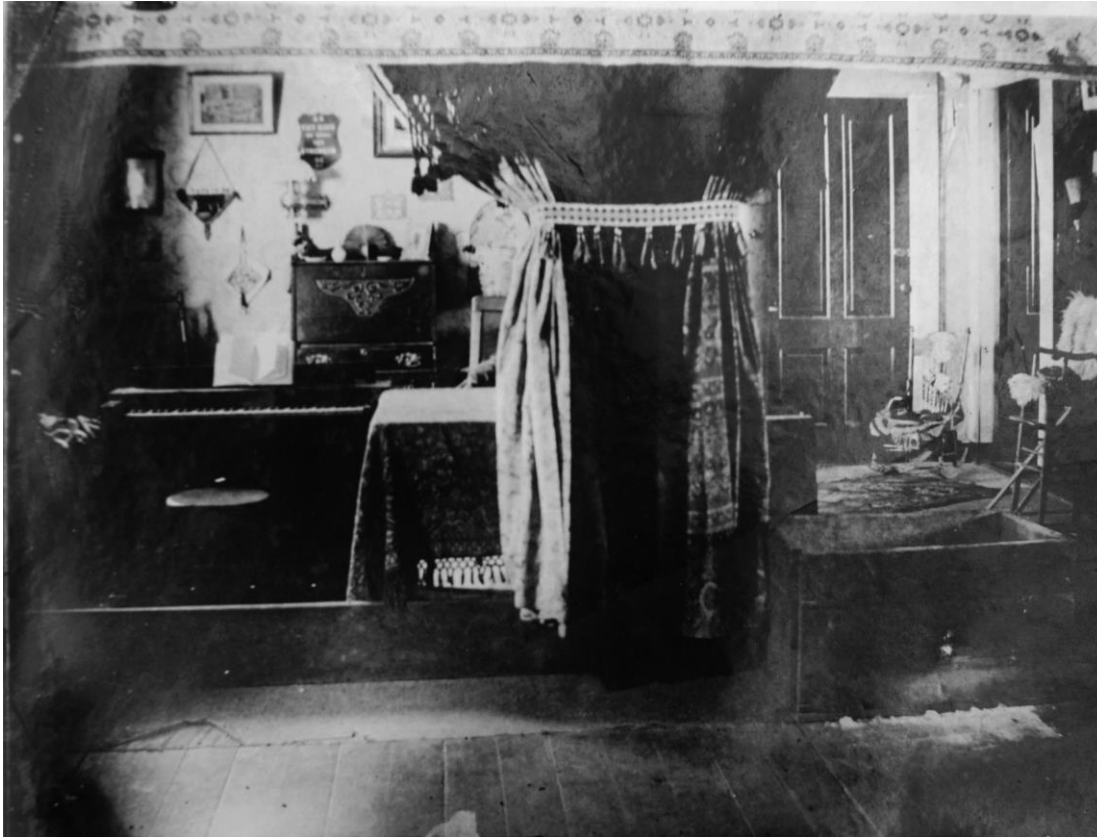
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<sup>220</sup> Stringer to mother, 29 January 1893, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

<sup>221</sup> Skeie, *Kingdom*, 82-83; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2: 277.

<sup>222</sup> Neylan, *Heavens*, 234-35.

<sup>223</sup> C.R. Weaver to CMS, 17 November 1896, *AL* (1896): 666.



**4.18:** Interior, Herschel Island Mission House, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Yukon Archives, PHO378-89-41-250*

Of particular importance was the creation of private space.<sup>224</sup> The most important private room in the mission house was the bedroom which served a different purpose in the Catholic and Protestant missions but no less reinforced ideas of privacy in the Christian home. In European culture, the bedroom was particularly important as the location where the monogamous married couple contributed to the growth of Christian families through reproduction; the bedroom was sacred, separate and private.<sup>225</sup> Both groups of missionaries saw indigenous living arrangements as potentially promoting

<sup>224</sup> Selina Bompas Journal, August 1892, in *Heroine*, 99.

<sup>225</sup> Perrot, "Family Triumphant," 124; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*, 2:289.



**4.19:** Bedroom, CMS Mission House at Churchill, c.1893. *University of Toronto, J.B. Tyrell Barren Lands Collection, P10542*

sexual impropriety and immorality because of their lack of internal division and not in line with the sacredness of the bedroom.<sup>226</sup> It was a mark of Christianity and civilization to have separate bedrooms for members of the family, as well as separate beds.<sup>227</sup> For CMS missionaries with wives, a separate bedroom was demonstrative of the living arrangements of Christian couples that the indigenous Christians also expected to adopt. The Warwicks, for example, at Fort Vermilion, very explicitly created separate bedrooms within the mission house for themselves and the native children living with them, to keep the relationship between married adults sacred and separate.<sup>228</sup> These bedrooms

<sup>226</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 283.

<sup>227</sup> Petitot, *Grand Lac*, 330.

<sup>228</sup> Young to CMS, December 1895, *AL* (1895): 571.





4.20: Bedroom, Catholic Mission House, Dunvegan. *Author's photo*

retained as much as possible the decoration and layout of European space, including the inclusion of a clearly demarcated bed (fig. 4.19), in contrast to indigenous people often described as sleeping wrapped in skins. The marital bedroom was an indicator of the single-family home and remained a singular, important space within their dwelling.

For the OMI, the demonstration of the marital bedroom, like the domestic, gendered arrangements of the Christian family was not possible. Nevertheless, the creation of separate bedrooms for the fathers and brothers was a key aspect of mission house design. Although keeping in line with “the rules of holy poverty”<sup>229</sup> when designing the new house at Dunvegan, Husson was clear that individual bedrooms for each of the residents was a key consideration of the design, to provide a location for sleeping, personal prayer and contemplation as part of developing an individual, as opposed to communal, relationship with God (fig. 4.20).<sup>230</sup> Separate bedrooms also re-emphasized their celibacy and put them above suspicion of having secret wives, which CMS missionaries were said to have accused them of, or engaging in homosexuality, something that concerned the Oblate leadership, particularly when Petitot was believed to have done so.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Husson to Faraud, 28 December 1889, AD-GLPPC-16. “...les règles de la ste pauvreté.”

<sup>230</sup> De Krangué to Faraud, 17 September 1888, AD-GLPPC-23.

<sup>231</sup> Choquette, *Oblate Assault*, 62-64.

But many early mission houses consisted of a single-roomed cabin. However, most had only one inhabitant, and often only for a short period of time during the year. Ideas surrounding propriety were less of an issue when a one-room house was occupied by a single male missionary. Clut, for example, lived in a one-room cabin at Hay River and made little mention of the space's interior division.<sup>232</sup> However, houses consistently evolved into multi-room structures to clearly demarcate private and public space as the existence of privacy within Christian life was seen as an indicator of both morality and civilization.<sup>233</sup> Although Séguin was alone at Tsiigehtichic for only several weeks during the year, he still desired to build an addition onto the house as a bedroom to separate public and private spaces.<sup>234</sup> The overlap between public and private space was further decried when the missionary was not single, but forced to live in less than ideal conditions. Reeve and his family, for example, lived in a single-room house with a kitchen addition at Fort Rae in the mid-1870s. He knew his hope for a new house would not be answered because the mission was to be abandoned, and wrote of the arrangement: "if God bless us with health and strength, we shall manage to get through it."<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Clut to Fabre, 8 August 1876, *Missions* 16 (1878): 25.

<sup>233</sup> Petitot to Faraud, 31 July 1867, AD-GLPPC-25; Reeve to CMS, November 1881, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1882/20; MacKinnon, "House-Chapels," 222; Michelle Perrot, "At Home," in *A History of Private Life*, 4:343.

<sup>234</sup> Séguin to Clut, 29 July 1876, *Missions* 16 (1878): 34.

<sup>235</sup> Reeve to CMS, 27 June 1876, CMSA-C/C1/O54/22.

*Conclusion*

When missionaries first established their missions, the house had a clear and integral role as a vital frontier space where European and indigenous worlds met and Christianity was presented to indigenous people as an alternative to traditional beliefs. The use of the space for worship and education allowed for missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, to teach and hold services without having to construct specific, purpose-built churches and schools, when there were neither sufficient resources nor population to justify doing so. At the same time, a house allowed missionaries to create a separate physical and ideological space from both the HBC and indigenous people, a practical and symbolic split that was integral for a mission's growth and purpose.

However, the house was also a dynamic space in its role as an object lesson and diorama serving to show indigenous people how Christians should live—arguably more so in the Protestant missions—and how Christians interacted with the natural environment through the erection of barriers and the creation of space to promote morality and keep out the sinful wilderness. Although it was hoped that they would do so, most native people did not build houses or cabins until the end of the century, making the house less of an immediate model and more of one which aimed to enact long-term change on indigenous communities. In fact, the integral and dynamic nature of the house itself was more indicative of the long-term strategy for Christianization and civilization that

missionaries were forced to adopt in the north because of its multifaceted functions as a singular structure in the midst of a wilderness environment. Until the erection of churches and school, the mission house was the mission at most stations, and its usage as a flexible yet ideologically loaded space defined the evangelical approach to northern mission for most of the second half of the nineteenth century.

## 5: Institution Building: Churches and Schools

By the end of the 1860s, both Catholic and Protestant missions in the north were firmly entrenched and continuing to expand, with continued interaction with indigenous people through the house. Although there were stations where the mission house remained the only building for decades, this was ultimately inadequate. Churches and schools were needed in order to strengthen and consolidate their position in the territory and provide vital spaces for the growing community of indigenous Christian converts as a centre of mediation, teaching and contact and one of consolidation, reflecting the role of the mission as it evolved from representing a new belief system to one that was present, entrenched and beginning to work wider changes within indigenous society.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ricard, *Spiritual Conquest*, 64-78.

Churches and schools were not constructed until a mission's permanence was assured, and, even so, some were eventually abandoned as missions consolidated resources.

Institutionalization was more marked in southern missions, on the prairies for example, where settlement was actively encouraged, but it was still present in the north despite the limited focus on altering traditional economies.<sup>2</sup> They were vital structures in achieving the ultimate goal of both organizations: the creation of permanent Christian communities, whether they be settled or nomadic. By the time these structures were erected, Christianity had already been introduced, but, in order to fully develop a new Christian society, it needed to be cultivated to retain the new beliefs introduced by missionaries. Institutional spaces were where this occurred. Churches were integral to the growth of a worshipping community and schools allowed for education in basic academic skills and reinforcement of Christian teaching in children in order to fully embed Christian beliefs in the rising generation. These structures were intended to serve mobile communities, with the hope that they perhaps might settle in the future, but they functioned and were intended to function based on the fundamental assumption that their role was to build a Christian society that would be present at the mission and on the land.

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<sup>2</sup>Zaslow, *Canadian North*, 66.

## Churches

In 1872, Horden wrote of the perception of the church in northern missions, stating:

“Any progress in the district may in some measure be represented by our activity in Church Building.”<sup>3</sup> At this time, the newly-created Diocese of Moosonee was embarking on a church building programme throughout James and Hudson Bays, recognizing that the church was an important priority in mission station development as well as an indicator of success. Two years later, Bompas, now Bishop of Athabasca, reflected on the same issue, but lamented that St. David’s, Fort Simpson, was the only church building in the entire north-western diocese, despite a very specific priority in getting them erected.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1870s, missionaries were ready to embark on vigorous church-building programmes but, that was not easy. Despite a very strong Catholic presence in the Mackenzie, for example, only four churches were erected there—at Forts Resolution (fig.5.1), Norman, Providence and Good Hope—when the new Vicariate of Mackenzie was created in 1901.<sup>5</sup> Although most Catholic missions had chapels appended to the mission house, adequately serving ecclesiological and liturgical needs, and often easier

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<sup>3</sup> Horden to Hutchinson, 9 September 1872, CMSA-C/C1/O33/116.

<sup>4</sup> Bompas, “First Synod,” 185.

<sup>5</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 65.





5.1: St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Fort Resolution, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-121*



5.2: St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Peel River (Fort McPherson). *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7517-194*

to heat, a separate church building remained the ultimate goal in order to have a dedicated public worship space.<sup>6</sup>

The struggle to erect separate churches was due to the same factors which hampered all construction: cost, lack of resources and limited personnel. Records from early missions consistently discuss these difficulties; a lack of resources and personnel to help with construction, for example, put the Anglican church at Peel River (fig.5.2) on hold several times throughout the late 1870s and early 1880s.<sup>7</sup> Even the Oblates had this problem, despite the presence of the lay brothers who did most construction work.<sup>8</sup> Kearney's

<sup>6</sup> Gascon to Faraud, 24 June 1870, AD-GLPPC-12.

<sup>7</sup> Sim to CMS, 19 January 1883, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1883/115.

<sup>8</sup> Gascon to Faraud, 5 February 1868, AD-GLPPC-12.



**5.3:** St. John's Anglican Church, York Factory, interior. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-34*

correspondence from Fort Good Hope outlines his significant role in the church construction project, but also the difficulty harvesting timber, making the process laborious and time consuming.<sup>9</sup> This became even more difficult in outstations where there were no brothers, such as at Tsiigehtchic where Séguin erected a rudimentary church structure alone.<sup>10</sup> The HBC's assistance was also limited. The first church at York Factory (fig.5.3), for example, was built and paid for by the HBC because it also served a

<sup>9</sup> See Joseph Kearney Correspondence, AD-GLPPC-17.

<sup>10</sup> Séguin to sister, 4 August 1875, PAA-PR1971.0220-7346.



**5.4:** Anglican Church, Fort Norman. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-146*

large European population, but this was not standard practice.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, indigenous congregations provided very little labour. Although they became increasingly involved in construction projects throughout the second half of the century, their continued seasonal migration patterns made this very difficult. Missionaries did not want to invest time and resources on an insecure station that might be abandoned or moved. Both organizations struggled with this at Fort Norman because the HBC post moved twice, and existing infrastructure needed to be abandoned or removed (fig. 5.4).<sup>12</sup> By the 1890s, both groups had dedicated construction personnel, but they were thinly stretched in a

<sup>11</sup> Mason to CMS, 16 September 1856, CMSA-C/C1/O42/6.

<sup>12</sup> Petitot to Faraud, 30 May [1869], AD-GLPPC-25.





5.5: St. Thomas' Anglican Church, Moose Factory, exterior. *Author's photo*

large territory.<sup>13</sup>As a result, church construction was a slow process, and it was only in the last decades of the century that it became a priority when missions were more firmly established. Despite these difficulties, the erection of churches was an integral aspect of mission station development because they were architecturally-distinctive and independent public worship spaces, set apart from the other mission buildings, and a clear indication of the spiritual, as opposed to temporal, goals of mission.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> John Hawksley to CMS, 30 January 1891, *AL* (1891): 138; Duchassois, *Apôtres*, 123.

<sup>14</sup> Skeie, *God's Kingdom*, 122; Mason to Venn, 12 September 1854, CMSA-C/C/O42/3A; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 208.

Vitally, a church showed the arrival and success of Christianity. The *Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor* articulated this in an 1866 article about the new St. Thomas', Moose Factory, completed in 1864 (figs.5.5 and 5.6). It stated:

Is it not now delightful that, in a great many places, where formerly God was unknown, churches now stand, showing that heathenism is departing and Christianity now taking its place?<sup>15</sup>

This was the dominant understanding of a church's role in the continuing visual dialogue between the wilderness and the mission, where churches showed "the land...gradually being leavened by the Gospel."<sup>16</sup> Architecture created a clear visual hierarchy between Christian and non-Christian worlds because of their distinctive form and function. Construction was a physical actualization of Christian concerns over space and belief and can be demonstrated, for example, in the nearly-universal whitewashed exterior, as metaphorical of the spiritual transition from darkness to light, a concern found in British Christianity noted as far back as the fifth-century church at Whithorn as recorded by Bede.<sup>17</sup> Farquhar made it very clear that, with the erection of the first church at Fort Chipewyan in 1851, the spiritual and material future of the mission was assured, through the intimate connection between belief and its physical manifestation through infrastructure.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "The Church at Moose Factory," *Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor* (1866): 64.

<sup>16</sup> Horden to Fenn, 5 February 1869, CMSA-C/C1/O33/60.

<sup>17</sup> Hovland, "Evangelical Placemaking," 334; Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 115.

<sup>18</sup> Farquhar, *Dix-Huit*, 126.



5.6: St. Thomas' Anglican Church, Moose Factory, interior. *Author's photo*

The erection of a church also built on biblical understandings of the development of worship space in the Christian tradition, beginning with the Hebraic Tabernacle (Ex 36:8-39:43) and Temple (1 Kgs 6).<sup>19</sup> Missionaries referred to these connections directly; Faraud, for example, wrote at Fort Chipewyan that “[t]he Holy Spirit was eager to live in this new Tabernacle.”<sup>20</sup> Drawing on these metaphors, the erection of churches indicated the successful transition of the non-Christian wilderness and its people as a material manifestation of the Body of Christ.<sup>21</sup>

Churches were an integral aspect of the spatial networks of missions because their visual consistency created connections across geography.<sup>22</sup> Although often very modest, churches created focal points within a large landscape, visually and as a central space for community worship.<sup>23</sup> Horden articulated this after the completion of St. Thomas’:

To those accustomed to the grand edifices in England, our plain little cathedral may seem small and mean but...the inhabitants of the interior will be as much struck with the grandeur of our example [*MS illegible*] as English provincials are with the noble churches of York and London.<sup>24</sup>

As spaces which represented and taught the relationship between heaven, earth and institutional Christianity, church buildings were regarded as a material witness in a still

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<sup>19</sup> Sivasindaram, *Godly Empire*, 173.

<sup>20</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 195. “Le Saint-Esprit avait hâte d’habiter dans ce nouveau tabernacle.”

<sup>21</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 114.

<sup>22</sup> Skeie, *God’s Kingdom*, 121-22.

<sup>23</sup> Bennett, *Sacred Space*, 32.

<sup>24</sup> Horden to unknown, 28 February 1885, GSA-M61-3.



hostile landscape which could draw in the eye and elevate the soul as a landmark representing the new spiritual order that missionaries hoped to introduce.<sup>25</sup>

These distinctions could be made because of the stylistic uniqueness of church architecture through the use of established ecclesiastical forms, although these were not the same across the two organizations. The vast majority of the buildings were constructed in timber but integrated Catholic and Anglican design principles found throughout Canada and Europe. Timber was not regarded as the best medium for construction because of its perceived lack of permanence and there was concern amongst both groups that more ambitious projects, including Fort Good Hope and Stanley Mission, were better suited to stone or brick.<sup>26</sup> They were not available, however, nor were they suitable for the climate, and church design proceeded in local materials, adapting it to the best effect to dominant trends in contemporary design.<sup>27</sup>

The churches erected by the CMS were primarily in the Gothic Revival style which characterized most Anglican church architecture after 1840. St. David's, Fort Simpson (1866; fig.5.7) is an excellent example, with lancet windows along the nave, a belfry, and an architecturally-distinct chancel with a tripartite western window. The translation

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<sup>25</sup> David Anderson to Venn, 9 August 1850, CMSA-C/C1/O2E/1/9; Neylan, *Heavens*, 235.

<sup>26</sup> Séguin to sister, 14 February 1878, PAA-PR1971.0220-7346; Kirkby Journal, 6 July 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/64. For a nineteenth-century perspective on timber construction, see: William Scott, "On Wooden Churches," *The Ecclesiologist* 7 (1848): 14-27.

<sup>27</sup> Bremner, *Imperial Gothic*, 143.



5.7: St. David's Anglican Church, Fort Simpson. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-142*

of this style onto the interior of the church can be seen at St. Paul's, Fort Chipewyan (1880; fig. 5. 8), where trefoil-headed lancets are visible in the pulpit and altar. These churches were actively described as "English", consistent with dominant Anglican perceptions of Gothic as an English, Christian style.<sup>28</sup>

Despite their use of the Gothic style, the CMS was not wedded to it like their High Anglican counterparts in other areas of the global mission field; for High Anglicans, the

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<sup>28</sup> Bompas to CMS, 4 May 1869, CMSA-C/C1/O10/35; Simon Bradley, "The Englishness of Gothic: Theories and Interpretations from William Gilpin to J.H. Parker," *Architectural History* 45 (2002): 325-26.



5.8: St. Paul's Anglican Church, Fort Chipewyan. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-120*

mid-century discourse on ecclesiologically-correct Gothic design fundamentally shaped their church building practice, towards a precise interpretation of prescribed features, including lancet windows, architecturally-distinct chancels, steeply-pitched roofs and verticality, as espoused by groups such as the Cambridge Camden Society.<sup>29</sup> These principles were actively adapted by High Anglicans in northern climates; William Grey, for example, in Newfoundland and Labrador harmonized correct design tenets with local needs in his churches.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, the CMS pragmatically adopted Gothic features to fit evangelical liturgical and theological foci and ease of construction, seen clearly in the

<sup>29</sup> Bremner, *Imperial Gothic*, 244-45.

<sup>30</sup> Shane O'Dea and Peter Coffman, "William Grey: 'Missionary' of Gothic in Newfoundland," *JSSAC* 32, no. 1 (2007): 39-48.

churches they erected.<sup>31</sup> St. Thomas', for example, integrates specific ecclesiological features, including a side porch, with practical solutions, such as the use of clapboard which was easier to install than vertical board and batten, preferred by High Anglicans. Similarly, the chancel was only added in 1884, when the congregation needed more space; this pragmatic expansion would have been completely unacceptable to High Anglicans for whom the chancel was liturgically and theologically necessary.<sup>32</sup>

The Oblates' churches, however, drew from rural Québécois prototypes, integrating Gothic features into overall classical layouts.<sup>33</sup> While few of the Oblates were from Québec, the architectural traditions reflected wider trends in early nineteenth-century French Catholic architecture which looked to Roman, as opposed to medieval, precedent, consistent with ultramontane emphasis on the supremacy of Rome.<sup>34</sup> The tendency towards a more monumental classicism is emphasized through the pediment-based façade with frontal entrance, rounded windows and central entrance portal surmounted by a classical belfry and spire, as well as the consistent use of interior barrel vaults and columns.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the century, Catholic churches remained primarily classical, although Petitot noted he had taken inspiration from medieval forms at Our

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<sup>31</sup> Emily Turner, "The Church Missionary Society and Architecture in the Mission Field: Evangelical Anglican Perspectives on Church Building Abroad, c.1850-1900," *Architectural History* 58 (2015): 223-25.

<sup>32</sup> Horden to unknown, 24 January 1882, GSA-M61-3.

<sup>33</sup> Bennett, *Sacred Space*, 50; Kalman, *Canadian Architecture*, 1:139-45; Ramsay Traquair, *The Old Architecture of Québec* (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1947), 135-43.

<sup>34</sup> See for example: Richard Cleary, "Texas Gothic, French Accent: The Architecture of the Roman Catholic Church in Antebellum Texas," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 66, no. 1 (2007): 65.

<sup>35</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 32.



5.9: Church of Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Good Hope. *Author's photo*

Lady of Good Hope (1865-85; fig.5.9) and churches, such as Ste-Thérèse, Fort Norman (c.1890s; fig.5.10), increasingly integrated Gothic features.<sup>36</sup> The second and third churches constructed at Fort Chipewyan in 1890 (fig.5.11) and 1909 (fig.5.12) respectively, replacing older, deteriorating buildings, show the consistency in this approach.<sup>37</sup>

One way that missionaries directly brought European forms to the north was through the use of pattern books, widely used at this time, for design inspiration.<sup>38</sup> Both Ancel

<sup>36</sup> Petitot, *Quinze Ans*, 113.

<sup>37</sup> Dupire to Faraud, 10 December 1888, AD-GLPPC-16.

<sup>38</sup> Barry Magrill, *A Commerce of Taste: Church Architecture in Canada, 1867-1914* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 76.



**5.10:** Ste-Thérèse, Fort Norman Catholic Mission. *Library and Archives Canada, PA100402*

and Grouard asked for pattern books to be sent to them, particularly for church ornaments.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Hunt noted in his journal that he had consulted pattern books in his design for Stanley Mission.<sup>40</sup> While Hunt is the only CMS missionary who explicitly noted his use of pattern books, other churches, such as St. Thomas', bear a close enough resemblance to European and North American pattern book models to suggest some influence. Despite these stylistic considerations, both organizations had to respond to the reality of the environment and churches generally remained quite modest.

Where outside influence was most direct was in the CMS missions at York Factory, Churchill, Little Whale River and Fort George where prefabricated iron churches were

<sup>39</sup> Grouard to Faraud, 16 June 1873, AD-GLPPC-14; Julien Ancel to Faraud, 31 October 1886, AD-GLPPC-1.

<sup>40</sup> Hunt Journal, 29 December 1853; 10 April 1894, CMSA-C/C1/O34/56.



5.11 : La Nativité, Fort Chipewyan, c.1890. *Glenbow Archives, NA-949-52*

imported directly from England between 1863 and 1892. The prefabricated iron church was commonly used in both Britain and its colonies, notably Australia, to provide functional churches where limited resources or labour made construction difficult.<sup>41</sup> They could be modified as needed with local materials, including for insulation, and performed well in northern climates, but were also used fairly extensively by the CMS in coastal Africa.<sup>42</sup> Iron churches were not universally accepted in England, as some bishops refused to consecrate them because they were impermanent,

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<sup>41</sup> Gilbert Herbert, *Pioneers of Prefabrication: The British Contribution in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1978), 97-109.

<sup>42</sup> Miles Lewis, "The Ecclesiology of Expediency in Colonial Australia," *Studies in Victorian Architecture and Design* 4 (2012): 33; 44; Peck to Wright, 10 August 1880, CMSA-C/C1/O49/16; Dandeson Crowther, "Brass Mission," *CMI* 15 (1885): 183.





5.12: La Nativité, Fort Chipewyan, c.1925. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-100509*





**5.13:** Iron Church, York Factory. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1992-29-130*

but, for remote missions, they provided an excellent “church-like”<sup>43</sup> space, as Kirkby described the church imported to York Factory in 1873 (fig. 5.13). Horden saw an iron church as an ideal solution for Little Whale River (fig. 5.14), where there was no suitable space to preach or teach, and no materials to build one.<sup>44</sup> After it arrived in 1879, missionary Edmund Peck constructed the building by himself over the course of eight weeks, negating issues of

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<sup>43</sup> Kirkby in “Far Away in the Cold,” *The Net Cast in Many Waters* (1874): 33. For issues around their use in England, see: Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (London: The Architectural Press, 1954), 1:528.

<sup>44</sup> Horden to Wright, 19 September 1876, CMSA-C/C1/O2D/19.



**5.14:** St. Edmund's Church, Little Whale River. *Author's photo*

resources and labour.<sup>45</sup> Being prefabricated, they could also be moved, meaning a mission station's permanence was not important; when the HBC post at Little Whale River moved to Great Whale River in 1891, the mission and the church moved with it.<sup>46</sup> But these churches could only be used in coastal missions because they required transport by ship.<sup>47</sup>

Interior furnishings were often imported, creating a direct cultural link to wider ecclesiastical design practice. George Wallis reported, for example, that the altar cloth at

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<sup>45</sup> Peck to Wright, 20 December 1879, CMSA-C/C1/O49/14.

<sup>46</sup> Peck, "Work Amongst the Eskimos," *CMI* 17 (1892): 33; Great Whale River Post Report, 1891, HBCA-B.372/e/5.

<sup>47</sup> Kirkby, "Diocese of Athabasca," *Ecclesiastical Gazette* 39 (1876):53.



5.15: Anglican Church, Rampart House c.1920. *Yukon Archives, Tidd Fonds, 7626-359*

Rampart House was imported from England, although it was later replaced by a locally-made, moose-skin one (figs. 5.15 and 5.16).<sup>48</sup> Unspecified fittings for the CMS church at Fort Simpson were also English-made.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, many Catholic furnishings were imported from France, particularly statuary and liturgical paraphernalia (fig. 5.17).<sup>50</sup> These articles incorporated into church design formed a space with direct visual links to the culture and tradition of European Christianity, transplanted into a northern environment.

The direct import and reproduction of European architectural norms in church design speaks to prevailing nineteenth-century practice which sought to replicate institutional

<sup>48</sup> G.C. Wallis to CMS, 13 July 1887, *AL* (1887): 29.

<sup>49</sup> Bompas to CMS, November 1868, *CMSA-C/C1/O10/10*.

<sup>50</sup> Séguin to sister, 18 May 1885, *PAA-PR1971.0220-186.7346*; "Mission de Notre Dame de Sacre Cœur au Fort Wrigley," *Missions* 38 (1900):94.

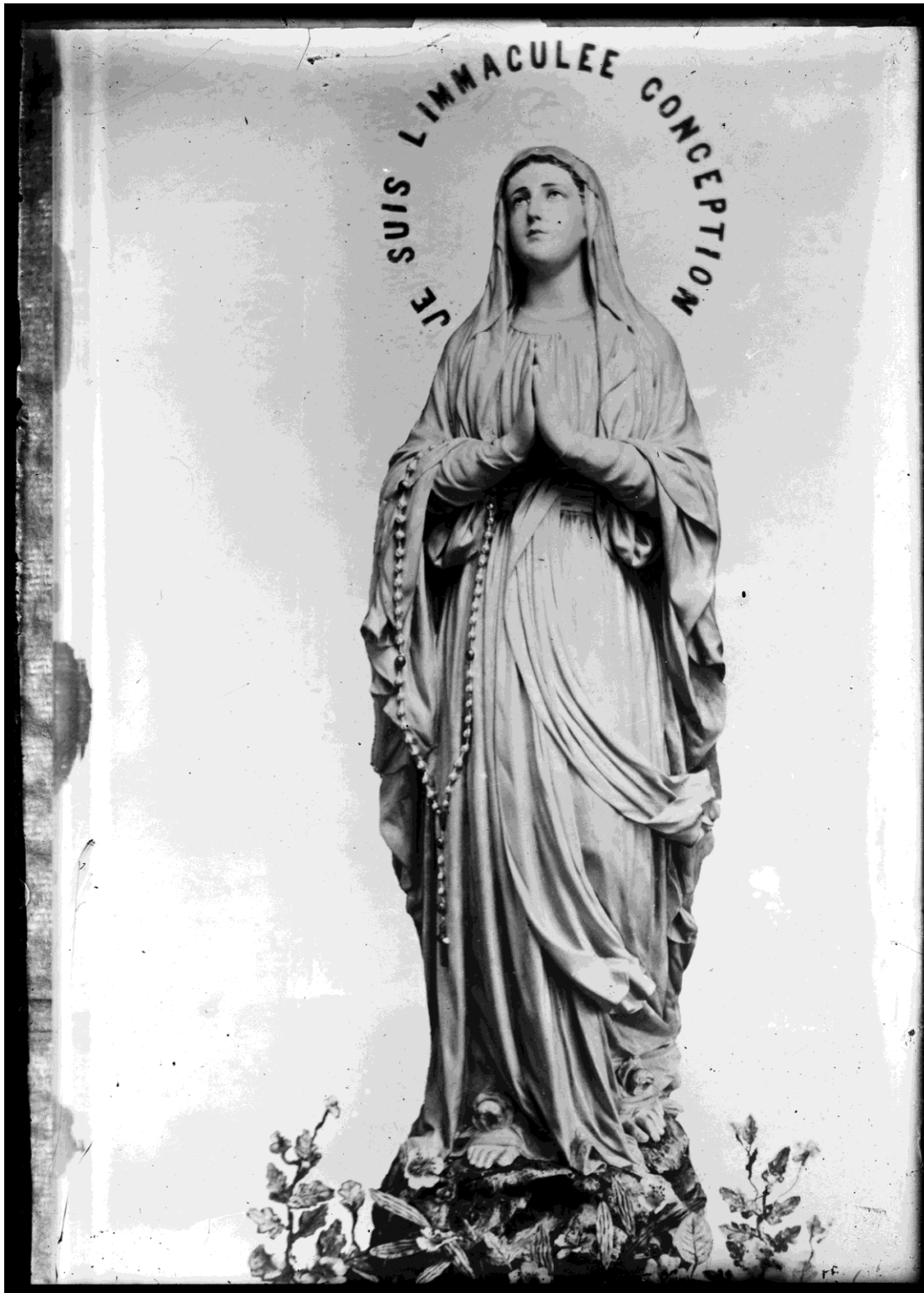


**5.16:** Moose Skin Frontal. *Yukon Archives, PHO328-86/61-107*

Christianity on foreign soil.<sup>51</sup>As with many other mission practices, this idea was part of a much longer tradition of replicating, or attempting to replicate, the forms of

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<sup>51</sup> Skeie, *God's Kingdom*, 124.



5.17: Imported Statue. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-250-N021*

the church's centre on its periphery, the mission field; as recorded by Bede many centuries earlier when Britain itself was a mission field, the goal was to "build a church of stone in their country after the Roman fashion," where new Christians would "always follow the customs of the holy Roman and apostolic Church, so far as they could learn them, remote though they were from the Roman people and from their language."<sup>52</sup> For the Oblates, it was consistent with the policies laid out by Mazenod about the transplantation of the institutional church into the mission field; church architecture was deemed integral to Catholicism itself, being replicated as part of a wider institutional transfer.<sup>53</sup> Insofar as evangelism was concerned, a church building was not actually necessary for liturgical and sacramental functions, as the Oblates regularly held services and administered the sacraments in mission houses and HBC buildings, in tents and even outside.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, designated ecclesiastical buildings were viewed as necessary for the holistic transplantation of Catholicism, and therefore needed to be erected to architectural standards.

The CMS's view on this issue was less clear-cut. Missionaries frequently performed the rites of Anglican worship in any appropriate venue, including HBC buildings, and outdoors; although not ideal, it was an appropriate solution for primary evangelism.<sup>55</sup> In practice, the churches that they built conformed to wider Anglican norms, but this was

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<sup>52</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 276.

<sup>53</sup> De Mazenod, *Instructions*, 13-15.

<sup>54</sup> Ducot to Tatin, 5 February 1886, *Missions* 24 (1886): 425-26.

<sup>55</sup> Newnham to CMS, 1895, *AL* (1895): 540.

not wider CMS policy. Because of their emphasis on “native agency”, many in the Society believed church design should be constructed by indigenous converts and make use of local architectural traditions, and this certainly did occur in some areas.<sup>56</sup> But for the most part, CMS architecture followed British precedent because of their understanding of indigenous architecture as part of the non-Christian wilderness.

Cultural precedent was also found in how churches were used, which was reflected in their design. Building on the understanding that ideology was manifested through architecture and practice, both organizations saw the erection of distinctive church spaces as a way to solidify religious practice, build communities and ensure orthodoxy.<sup>57</sup> There was a clear understanding that church buildings were able to communicate ideology, in tandem with and separately from teaching, preaching and the sacraments. This was consistent with contemporary thought on architecture, particularly churches, as a communicative medium which reflected and developed belief.<sup>58</sup> Peck, writing about the church at Little Whale River, articulated this view most clearly:

As the church will be visible to all, it will be a silent witness to God. The Esquimaux will understand our desires for their welfare far better than if mere words were used....so that any influence will be greater and I hope more widely felt.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>For example: T.P. Hughes, *All Saints Memorial Church in the City of Peshawar, Afghanistan* (1885): 3-4; Richard Sundt, *Whare Karakia: Maori Church Building, Decoration and Ritual in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1834-1863* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2010), 88-134.

<sup>57</sup> Bennett, *Sacred Space*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> A.W.N. Pugin, *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1895), 4; Crinson, *Orientalism*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Peck to Wright, 20 December 1879, CMSA-C/C1/O49/14.

The church itself was seen as “a birthplace of souls”<sup>60</sup> and a witness to Christian teaching which would “draw the minds of the Esquimaux towards the Saviour.”<sup>61</sup> Faraud likewise saw: “[t]he construction of the material church as joined to the spiritual church”<sup>62</sup>, assisting in the instruction of indigenous people. Visually and functionally, churches were viewed as having a clear and unambiguous impact on the development of Christianity, by attracting new converts and speaking to them through material form.<sup>63</sup> Missionaries believed churches would articulate to indigenous people why they had come to show them the path to God.<sup>64</sup>

For Catholics, part of this role was attached to the presence of God in the structure through the consecrated host.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, both organizations believed that a church’s architectural and technical achievements, particularly in contrast with indigenous buildings, would attract people by showcasing the attractiveness of Christianity as a belief system.<sup>66</sup> One Oblate priest was forthright about this assumption, noting that:

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<sup>60</sup> Kirkby to Dawes, 16 June 1864, CMSA-C/C1/O39/34.

<sup>61</sup> Peck to Wright, 10 August 1880, CMSA-C/C1/O49/16.

<sup>62</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 30. “A la construction de l’église matérielle se joignant celle de l’église spirituelle...”

<sup>63</sup> Eynard to Faraud, 16 December 1863, AD-GLPPC-8; Kirkby Journal, 1 November 1873, CMSA-C/C1/O39/78.

<sup>64</sup> Grouard, “Vicariat Apostolique d’Athabaska-Mackenzie,” *Missions* 32 (1894):165.

<sup>65</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 133.

<sup>66</sup> Lewis, *E.J. Peck*, 112; Petitot to [Faraud], 1 October 1868, AD-GLPPC-25. See also: Mackenzie, “Missionaries,” 114.



Only having seen the 'Holy House of Prayer' with its decorations, its tableaux, its altar, its cross and its images, did they begin to understand and to have a taste for the things of God.<sup>67</sup>

Building a church could bring people fully into Christianity because the buildings were viewed spiritually-and emotionally-inspiring, an entryway into full communion with God; while many might profess to be Christians, experiencing the church building made conversion real. Many missionaries believed that through "the walls of the new earthly building...man may be brought into the spiritual temple."<sup>68</sup>

The growth of Christian belief amongst converts was also developed through liturgical practice. Grouard summarized the function of missionaries to "instruct, baptise, marry, administer confession and prepare [indigenous people] for the holy communion"<sup>69</sup> in preparation for admission into the church. These things could be all achieved without a building; at the second synod of the Anglican Diocese of Athabasca in 1892, Bishop Richard Young stated that "appropriateness of surroundings"<sup>70</sup> were not necessary to perform religious services and administer the sacraments, a view shared by the Oblates in practice. However, the fact that it needed to be articulated so directly speaks to the desire for "appropriate" surroundings for liturgy and the sacraments.

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Grant, *Wintertime*, 170.

<sup>68</sup> Vincent C. Sim to CMS, 1 August 1880, CMSA-C/C1/O59/5. See also: Clut to Jeanne Séguin, 5 February 1872, AD-GLPP-699.

<sup>69</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 50. "...instruire, baptiser, marier, confesser et préparer à la sainte communion."

<sup>70</sup> *Second Meeting*, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1892/226.

Outside of the church building, performing liturgy was difficult, although not impossible, because of spatial requirements; in small Catholic house chapels, for example, spaces created limitations on processional liturgy. These limitations forced modifications which, although accepted in early evangelism, were not suited to the transplantation of institutional worship. Thus the church became the space of cultural transfer where established rites and rituals could be performed and communion with God and the global Christian community could be established and maintained by indigenous Christians. Liturgy also provided a clear structure to Christian practice which was at odds with more-flexible indigenous spiritual practice, acting as a mode of acculturation in the establishment of new and regularized methods of spiritual interaction within designated sacred space.<sup>71</sup> While both organizations focused on developing personal faith, liturgical practice within the church worked to establish what CMS secretary and historian Eugene Stock referred to as “solidity in the Body of Christ”<sup>72</sup>, that is the creation of a Christian community based in universal practice and participation as articulated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. Liturgy and practice brought people into the church as a building and as an institution, encouraging their growth as full and active members.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Petitot, *Dènè-Dindjié*, 36-37; Grouard to Faraud, 18 June 1870, AD-GLPPC-14; Skeie, *God’s Kingdom*, 131.

<sup>72</sup> Stock, *History*, 2:412.

<sup>73</sup> Ducot to “Directeur des *Annals*”, 10 February 1885, *Missions* 23 (1885): 408; Clut to [Faraud] 23 May 1866, AD-GLPP-657.

The liturgical practices of the two organizations were explicitly different and manifested through the activities which missionaries were insistent that indigenous converts attend and participate in.<sup>74</sup> That indigenous people often enthusiastically attended worship services was remarked upon positively by missionaries as an indicator of the growing strength of the Christian community.<sup>75</sup> What participation entailed, however, remained denominationally divided. Vincent summarized CMS worship practice in an 1888 letter, writing: "We mostly make use of the beautiful prayers of our Church service, and this is always followed by the reading of God's Word, together with a plain explanation and practical exhortation."<sup>76</sup> The focus on congregational worship centred on the Word through sober liturgy reinforced the theological emphasis of evangelical Anglicanism.<sup>77</sup> The specific need to establish distinctly Anglican practice was articulated by Horden after his arrival at Moose Factory with its pre-existing Methodist church. He wrote: "its interior is not much like that of a place of worship connected with the Established church"<sup>78</sup>, noting the need for extensive changes to make it explicitly suited for Anglican liturgical practice.

Like their Anglican counterparts, the Oblates worked to established rites and practice in line with the Catholic Church, with emphasis on hierarchical structure in uniform,

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<sup>74</sup> Ducot, "Rapport sur la Mission de Sainte-Thérèse," *Missions* 28 (1890): 256; Grant, *Wintertime*, 112-13.

<sup>75</sup> Wallis to CMS, 13 July 1887, *AL* (1887): 30.

<sup>76</sup> Vincent to CMS, 9 January 1888, *AL* (1887): 376.

<sup>77</sup> John Sanders to CMS, 25 November 1895, *AL* (1895): 543; Andrew Landale Drummond, *The Church Architecture of Protestantism* (Edinburgh T&T Clark, 1934), 62.

<sup>78</sup> Horden to Straith, 1 September 1854, CMSA-C/C1/O33/17A.

external liturgy.<sup>79</sup>The Oblates worked specifically to replicate the “exercises of our holy religion”<sup>80</sup> including regular services and feast days. Central to the liturgy were the visuals of worship, including architectural forms and ceremony. Ritual within the church was seen as an integral aspect of both local and global churches, where the replication of rites and devotions in the mission field built and strengthened a faithful indigenous church and integrated them into institutional Catholicism.<sup>81</sup>Liturgy was also important for individual Christians themselves; as Pascal reported to Clut after Christmas 1888 at Fort Chipewyan, “these ceremonies do good and our Christians return consoled and fortified”<sup>82</sup> through presence and participation.

One of the major areas of church participation encouraged by both groups of missionaries was music.<sup>83</sup> Music was integral to traditional indigenous ceremonial and spiritual practice, including the Dene and Cree; missionaries took advantage of this and used music to attract indigenous people, it being noted they enjoyed musical participation.<sup>84</sup> In contrast to the heavy emphasis on literacy, music integrated more

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<sup>79</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 274.

<sup>80</sup> Lecorre to [Faraud], 27 June 1878, AD-GLPPC-18. “...les exercices de notre sainte religion...”

<sup>81</sup> De Krangué to Faraud, 19 February 1884, AD-GLPPC-23; Petitot to Faraud, 8 February 1870, AD-GLPPC-25.

<sup>82</sup> Pascal to Clut, 26 December 1888, AD-GLPPC-24. “Ces cérémonies font du bien et nos chrétiens s’en retournent consolés et fortifiés.”

<sup>83</sup> “Le Mission Saint-Henri, Fort Vermilion,” *Missions* 45 (1907): 475.

<sup>84</sup> Hunter, Report, July 1848, CMSA-C/C1/O35/124; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 50-51. See also: Abel, *Drum Songs*, 133; Kristin Mann, *The Power of Song: Mission and Dance in the Mission Communities of Northern New Spain, 1590-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 3; Lynn Whidden, *Essential Song: Three Centuries of Northern Cree Music* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), 13-30; John Koegel, “Spanish and French Mission Music in Colonial North America,” *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 126, no. 1 (2001): 1-53.

smoothly into indigenous oral culture and was used as a tool for learning, acculturation and participation in church life.<sup>85</sup> This did not mean that missionaries accepted indigenous musical traditions. Drumming, for example, was actively discouraged because it was seen as non-Christian.<sup>86</sup> Singing, however, was widely accepted as a way to bridge the gap between Christian and non-Christian practice.<sup>87</sup>

Emphasis on music necessarily meant translation of hymns into indigenous languages and development of new ones.<sup>88</sup> Texts such as John Horden's *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns in the Cree Indian Language of North-West America* (1874) laid a foundation for musical practice by directly transcribing European hymns into indigenous languages. However, because music also had pre-Christian spiritual usages, it was important for missionaries to define the role and place of music within the Christian context. Music used in the liturgy was divorced from pre-Christian practice in its context, content and role in congregational worship, changing its overall place in society; this was particularly marked in Catholic missions which used a sung Mass.<sup>89</sup> There was also new musical

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<sup>85</sup> Christopher Bilodeau, "'They Honour Our Lord among Themselves in Their Own Way': Colonial Christianity and the Illinois Indians," *American Indian Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2001): 361-62.

<sup>86</sup> David Anderson, *The Net in the Bay, or, the Journal of a Visit to Moose and Albany* (London: Hatchards, 1873), 138; Whidden, *Essential Song*, 36.

<sup>87</sup> Petitot to OMI, 31 August 1862, *Missions* 2 (1863): 224; Spendlove to CMS, 18 December 1888, *AL* (1888): 213.

<sup>88</sup> Abel, *Drum Songs*, 133.

<sup>89</sup> Swindrovich, "Stanley Mission," 83-85; Mann, *Mission and Dance*, 3.

accompaniment through the introduction of the harmonium, imported to Catholic and Anglican missions across the north explicitly for church music.<sup>90</sup>

Music also had a specific role in the introduction of doctrine because it was embedded with Christian ideology. For illiterate people, especially, music was an important teaching tool.<sup>91</sup> But music itself was also a form of edification, possibly more so than sermons because of its participatory and emotive qualities.<sup>92</sup> Grouard, for example, wrote: “Each hymn closed a substantial summary of some great truth with pious invocations to God and the Holy Virgin; their souls enjoyed, I believe, a greater spiritual profit than heard from a long discourse.”<sup>93</sup> Although Christian music was encouraged outside the mission, within the church, music provided a means of participation and indoctrination into Christian religious norms in a communal worship setting. The building was the place where this practice was formed and usage and content introduced as part of Christian tradition.<sup>94</sup>

The most important aspect of liturgy and ritual, however, was the administration of the sacraments. Sacramental worship consistently took place outside of dedicated churches,

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<sup>90</sup> See for example: Spendlove to CMS, 20 August 1892, *AL* (1892): 183; Grouard to OMI, 16 June 1899, *Missions* 38 (1890): 85.

<sup>91</sup> Mann, *Mission and Dance*, 140.

<sup>92</sup> Dupire to Clut, 1 January 1881, AD-GLPPC-6.

<sup>93</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 50-51. “Chaque cantique renfermait un résumé substantiel de quelque grande vérité, avec de pieuses invocations à Dieu et à la Sainte Vierge; les âmes, je crois, un plus grand profit spirituel, qu’à entendre de longs discours.”

<sup>94</sup> Vincent to [Wright], 19 January 1880, CMSA-C/C1/O70/15.

including mission houses and indigenous camps. However, sacramental worship inside the church was integral to Christian practice and the church created a physical space in which converts participated in sacred rites as ports of entry to the global communion of Christians. As visible signs of both grace and membership, the Oblates specifically noted that the Dene viewed the sacraments as intrinsically powerful; the connection between building and sacrament, therefore, also increased the power of the church as a space and an institution.<sup>95</sup>

Both organizations emphasized baptism and the Eucharist as the primary sacraments. Baptism was the first sacrament given to new converts and was regarded as a sign of membership and congregational participation. This new sign was often accompanied by the giving of a new, non-indigenous name, a common practice in nineteenth-century missions.<sup>96</sup> Both organizations aimed to baptize only those who were truly converted, but this was not always easy to judge, and Catholic missionaries regularly baptised all infants in case they died.<sup>97</sup> Baptism was regarded as admission to “the visible church of Christ”<sup>98</sup>, both the wider global community and its architectural manifestation. Its gradual removal indoors with the inclusion of fonts in churches strengthened this connection.<sup>99</sup> Membership was reaffirmed through confirmation, which Grouard

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<sup>95</sup> Faraud to de Mazenod, 18 December 1858, AD-GLPP-1615.

<sup>96</sup> Kirkby Journal, 22 October 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/64; Etherington, “Visible Signs,” 429.

<sup>97</sup> Peck to CMS, 20 August 1887, *AL* (1887): 379; McCarthy, *Great River*, 86-87.

<sup>98</sup> Vincent to CMS, 12 January 1892, *AL* (1891): 370.

<sup>99</sup> Wallis to CMS, 13 July 1887, *AL* (1887): 30.

reported that his Dene congregants referred to as “the sacrament that makes the heart strong.”<sup>100</sup> It was widely accepted that people needed to demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of Christian doctrine and the catechism before being confirmed.<sup>101</sup>

The Eucharist was undoubtedly the most important sacrament for both organizations, theological differences aside. It was, as noted by Vincent, “the highest privilege to which we could admit them [indigenous people]”<sup>102</sup> and formed a key aspect of sacramental life, although Anglicans did not receive it frequently. In order to participate, converts were required to demonstrate knowledge and commitment to the Christian faith, summarized by Father Bruno Roure, for Catholics, as “knowledge of rosary prayers, true Christian principles and good conduct.”<sup>103</sup> Alongside the Eucharist, the other significant sacrament for Catholics was penance. Penance, in particular, discussed frequently in missionary correspondence because the Dene actively participated in it; Petitot hypothesized this was the case because it corresponded to traditional processes of confession and fasting before healing.<sup>104</sup> As a result, it became a key aspect of the Oblates’ mission practice, bolstering its sacramental importance through active participation.

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<sup>100</sup> Grouard, “Excursions au Mackenzie et Klondyke,” *Missions* 39 (1901) : 132.

<sup>101</sup> Newnham to CMS, 1895, *AL* (1895): 540.

<sup>102</sup> Vincent to CMS, 12 January 1893, *AL* (1892): 470.

<sup>103</sup> Bruno Roure to [Faraud], 28 June 1880, AD-GLPPC-27. “...la connaissance des prières du chapelet, des principales vérités chrétiennes et le bon conduit.”

<sup>104</sup> Petitot, “Étude,” 508; Raffaele Pettazoni, *Essays in the History of Religion*, trans. H.J. Rose (Leiden: Brill, 1954), 43-54.



The sacraments were important integrally, but they were also intended to take place within the church, although they did not have to. But the sacraments provided a theologically-important, sacred ceremony with prescribed rites within a designated Christian space. Missionaries administered the sacraments, primarily the Eucharist, at the mission in order to correspond with times when indigenous communities were mostly present and could participate collectively inside the church. For example, Lofthouse administered the Eucharist only on special occasions at Churchill to allow for consistent congregational participation; Gascon, meanwhile, reported at Fort Rae a rush to ensure that confirmations and the Eucharist were held before the Dene departed so they could receive the sacrament within a Christian context.<sup>105</sup> The importance of the sacraments within the building itself was further reinforced by the common practice by both organizations of excluding people from the sacraments for deemed bad behaviour, which extended to admittance to the church.<sup>106</sup> The sacraments built a role for the church as the location of ritual and the creation of a covenant between converts and the church for which they could be excluded, spiritually and physically, for non-compliance.

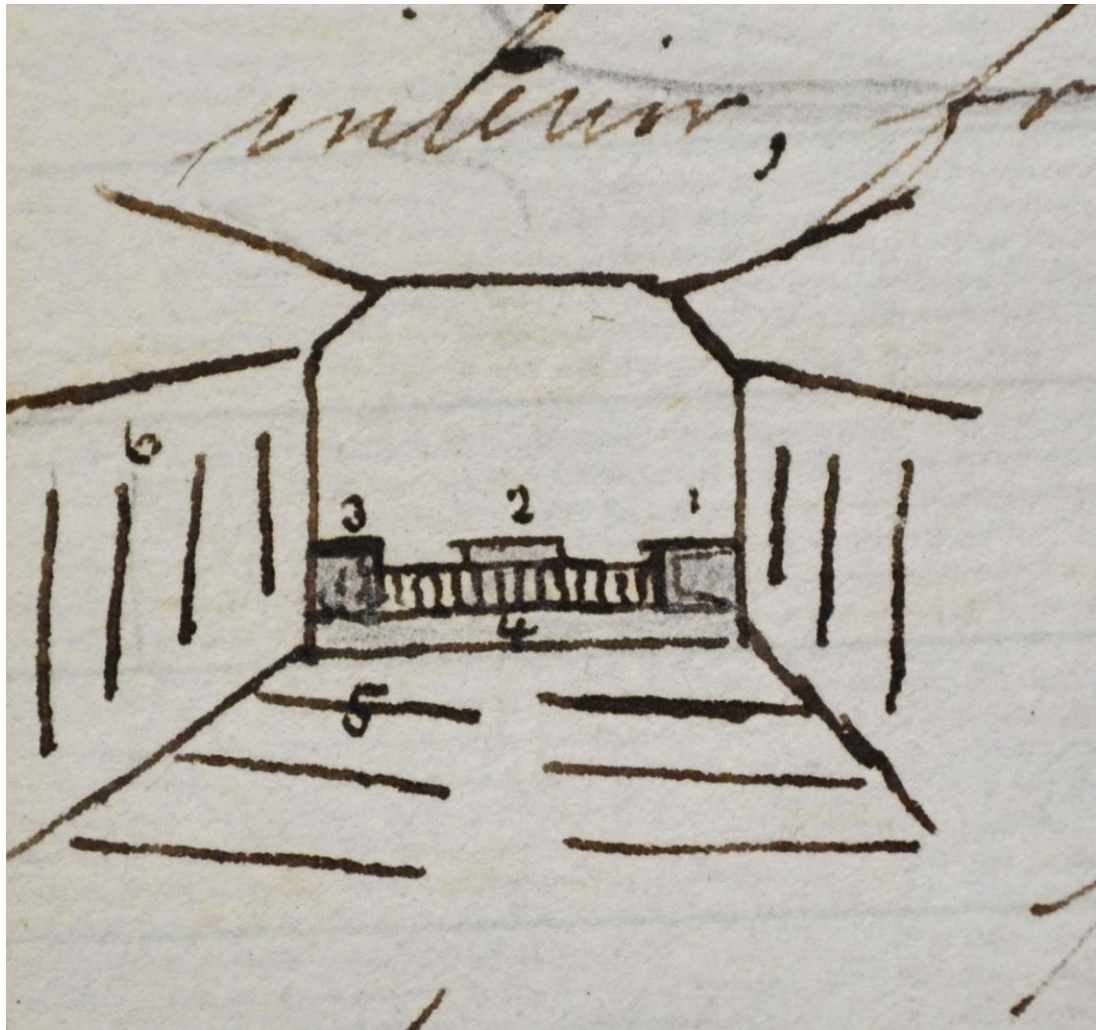
Liturgy and the sacraments also shaped the church's internal layout (fig. 5.18).<sup>107</sup> The spatial requirements of the Eucharist were important in both denominations and the

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<sup>105</sup> Lofthouse Journal, 2 December 1889, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1890/107; Gascon to Faraud, 26 November 1867, AD-GLPPC-12.

<sup>106</sup> Clut to Vegreville, 17 June 1862, LAC-M2073; Grandin Journal, 23 June 1863, *Missions* 5 (1866): 383; Séguin to his sister, 27 February 1880, PAA-PR1971.0220-7345.

<sup>107</sup> Bennett, *Sacred Space*, 59-62.



**5.18:** William West Kirkby, Drawing of church interior, early 1870s. *Church Missionary Society Archives C/C1/O39/74*

presence of altars and altar rails speak to that (figs. 5.19 and 5.20).<sup>108</sup> Similarly, the Catholic, and to a lesser degree Anglican, practice of active liturgy is apparent in interior structure and layout of pews and aisles, with a central aisle and, for Catholics, a frontal entrance allowing for processional worship. The Anglican emphasis on the Word, similarly, is reflected in the chancel furniture, including the lectern and pulpit. Horden's

<sup>108</sup> Hawksley to CMS, 30 January 1891, *AL* (1891): 139.



**5.19:** St. David's Fort Simpson, Interior. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-191*

concerns about liturgically appropriate space “well-crafted for worship”<sup>109</sup> were universal and the interior layouts reflected the respective needs of both denominations. The internal workings of these buildings reflected and supported denominational worship practice and theology with the explicit intent of bringing indigenous people into the Christian community and building their understandings through participation in worship in designated sacred space.

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<sup>109</sup> Horden to Fenn, [autumn 1884], GSA-M61-3.



5.20: Fort Resolution Convent Chapel, interior, c.1910. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives*, 1987-250-N018



**5.21:** Anglican Church, Fort Severn. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7539-16*

The desire to create Christian communities also drove church development. Through the church, new Christians were expected to participate in worship services together to form a new, local indigenous church, within the global communion. This idea was articulated most strongly by Venn whose “native church” policy was intended to create enduring self-sufficient Christian communities to allow for eventual missionary withdrawal.<sup>110</sup> Although underlying racial assumptions made many CMS missionaries question the ability of indigenous Christians to form independent congregations, the desire to create Christian communities remained, and these had their nexus in the church, especially for non-settled people who came together a few times per year to

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<sup>110</sup> Yates, *Victorian Bishops*, 202.

worship in sanctified, designated surroundings.<sup>111</sup> New churches strengthened congregations by bringing them together in a space for guided, communal worship, particularly with regard to collective participation in the Eucharist as a coming together in Christ; Vincent, for example, specifically articulated this understanding in his drive in the late 1880s and early 1890s to build churches at all of the outstations he served from Fort Albany (fig.5.21).<sup>112</sup> The administration of the sacraments within this communal setting also established the spiritual and institutional hierarchy between the laity, clergy and episcopacy within Christian communities.<sup>113</sup>

Spatial orientation and community were also linked to Christian behaviour. This was specifically emphasized through the settled mission strategy, but this understanding was not lost when the settlement strategy was put aside. Necessarily, this included issues such as monogamy but it was also hoped that participation in church life and worship norms would ensure that indigenous people were not “plunged into the error of their old condition.”<sup>114</sup> There was flexibility in this; for example, the Catholic proscription of eating meat on Fridays was not enforced.<sup>115</sup> But new behaviours with regard to marriage, alcohol and gambling, for example, were inculcated through liturgical

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<sup>111</sup> Abel, “Bompas,” 119; Vincent to CMS, 23 August 1886, *AL* (1886): 8; Séguin to [Faraud], 10 May 1879, AD-GLPPC-30.

<sup>112</sup> Vincent to CMS, 12 December 1894, *AL* (1894): 462; Dupire to Clut, 1 January 1881, AD-OGLPCC-6.

<sup>113</sup> Grouard, “Vicariat Apostolique d’Athabaska-Mackenzie,” *Missions* 32 (1894): 165; Yates, *Victorian Bishops*, 20; 98

<sup>114</sup> Clut to [Faraud], 16 December 1861, AD-GLPPC-633. “ils seraient bien vite replongés dans l’erreur ou leur ancien état.”

<sup>115</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 88.

participation and sermons, as well as through the restrictions on its tightly-regulated membership.<sup>116</sup>

A key idea that missionaries desire to inculcate was that of charity.<sup>117</sup> There was a widespread belief that churches and worship within them implicitly encouraged people to be better Christians, but charity had a clear link to church construction because of the expectation that indigenous Christians would help build or fund their own churches.<sup>118</sup> This issue was more strongly articulated by the CMS, likely because the Oblates had both funding through Catholic organizations in Rome and lay brothers to do construction, but it was present in both denominations. John Ellington at Buxton Mission articulated the need for indigenous people to exhibit a spirit of giving and self-denial in order to erect a church, linking it to the Old Testament where “the children of Israel gave willingly both material and labour”<sup>119</sup> towards the Tabernacle and Temple, a nod to the comparisons between indigenous people and the Israelites. Although it was understood that northern indigenous congregations fully funding their own church buildings was, in McDonald’s words, “simply a delusion”<sup>120</sup>, the application of charity as a Christian principle was encouraged and expected.

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<sup>116</sup> Lecorre to [Faraud], 6 February 1887, AD-GLPPC-18; Grant, *Wintertime*, 110; 173.

<sup>117</sup> Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 169.

<sup>118</sup> Célestin Joussard to [Faraud], 18 June 1882, AD-GLPPC-18; Marsh to CMS, December 1901, *AL* (1901): 742-43.

<sup>119</sup> J.W. Ellington to CMS, 24 April 1889, *AL* (1889): 72.

<sup>120</sup> McDonald to CMS, 30 January 1891, *AL* (1891): 137.



Christian communities also needed to be orthodox communities and orthodoxy was taught within the walls of the church. Missionaries noted that indigenous people were receptive to Christianity and this was fairly accurate; most northern indigenous people were eager to engage with missionaries, even if they did not immediately convert.<sup>121</sup> Published accounts, such as Anderson's *The Net in the Bay* (1873), presented a narrative where indigenous people rapidly accepted Christianity, with a child-like willingness to be taught.<sup>122</sup> Anderson, for example, wrote of the Moose Factory Cree that the "rites of superstition, the drum of the conjuror have now left this spot...there is no open defiance of God's word among the Indians, not one who refuses to worship and conform outwardly."<sup>123</sup>

However, Anderson's words belie a deeper understanding than his overall narrative suggests because to "conform outwardly" was not the same as complete acceptance. The adoption of Christianity by indigenous people was not a straightforward process, nor were indigenous converts the grateful vessels portrayed in missionary literature. Rather conversion was a pragmatic process where indigenous people accepted Christian teachings based on their own needs.<sup>124</sup> Many indigenous people were, in the words of

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<sup>121</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 113-14.

<sup>122</sup> Horden to Tucker, 17 February 1882, LAC-MG17-B1.14.162; John S. Long, "Manitu, Power, Books and Wihtikow: Some Factors in the Adoption of Christianity by Nineteenth-Century Western James Bay Cree," *Native Studies Review* 3, no. 1 (1987): 4.

<sup>123</sup> Anderson, *Net*, 138.

<sup>124</sup> Abel, *Drum Songs*, 121; John S. Long, *Treaty 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 9.



William Spendlove, “possessed of two minds on the matter of religion”<sup>125</sup>, accepting aspects of Christianity, while retaining some indigenous belief and practice.<sup>126</sup> That some aspects of indigenous belief were compatible with Christianity, such as the concept of a creation figure, made this crossover relatively fluid, and, for missionaries, this kind of syncretism was extremely problematic.<sup>127</sup>

This issue was highlighted by the independent prophetic movements which emerged throughout the nineteenth century, which missionaries viewed as a clear threat to Christian orthodoxy.<sup>128</sup> Noted first by the Methodists around James Bay, prophetic movements were characterized by the emergence of an indigenous spiritual leader who combined and presented aspects of Christian and traditional belief and practice.<sup>129</sup> Many spoke against Christian moral norms, especially monogamy. One of the most notable examples occurred at Île-à-la-Crosse in 1859 where a Dene man naming himself “Son of God” challenged Grandin’s spiritual authority, speaking in tongues and presenting revelations he had received in a dream.<sup>130</sup> Similar prophets emerged throughout the

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<sup>125</sup> Spendlove Journal, 1 August 1884, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1885/5.

<sup>126</sup> John S. Long, “The Anglican Church in Western James Bay : Positive Influence or Destructive Force?” in *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada*, 107.

<sup>127</sup> Émile Petitot, *Traditions indiennes du Canada nord-ouest* (Paris : Maisonneuves Frères et C. Leclerc, 1886), x-xi.

<sup>128</sup> Kerry Abel, “Prophets, Priests and Preachers: Dene Shamans and Christian Missions in the Nineteenth Century,” *Historical Papers Canadian Historical Association* 21, no. 1 (1986): 220; McCarthy, “Theory,” 309.

<sup>129</sup> Grant, “Messiahs,” 125-126; Bryan Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Protest Among Tribal and Third-World People* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

<sup>130</sup> Taché, *Vingt Années*, 109-11.

north, recorded by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries.<sup>131</sup> Clut believed the prophets were possessed by the devil, a very real spiritual threat to the growth of Christianity and missionary authority.<sup>132</sup> Selina Bompas made the observation that the priests and ministers were taking the role of spiritual leader within society, away from its traditional holders, including shamans and medicine men, making spiritual authority a key issue in struggles around belief systems.<sup>133</sup> Although this observation was made by few others, the prophetic movements demonstrated this struggle for authority in which missionaries were engaged, making the creation of orthodoxy through standardized Christian practice extremely important.

Spatially, the prophetic movements were tied to the land, actively rejecting the dichotomy between Christianity and wilderness; many prophets claimed that their followers would gain spiritual and temporal bounty through the natural environment, rejecting the civilized, European ideal.<sup>134</sup> Crucially, Faraud observed the rejection of European space, noting an incident at Fort Chipewyan when a prophet told his followers they would die if they entered the Catholic church.<sup>135</sup> A dichotomy, therefore, was established between syncretic beliefs, present in traditional wilderness space, and Catholic orthodoxy, as manifested through the church, emphasizing a spatial separation

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<sup>131</sup> For example: Petitot, *Grand Lac*, 98-99; Grouard to Cox, 9 December 1866, AD-HPF4191.C75-126; Spendlove to Wright, 30 November 1880, CMSA-C/C1/O64/5.

<sup>132</sup> Clut to Faraud, 17 June 1862, AD-GLPP-635; Abel, "Prophets," 219.

<sup>133</sup> Selina Bompas in *Heroine*, 172.

<sup>134</sup> Abel, "Prophets," 212-18.

<sup>135</sup> Faraud to [Fabre], 15 November 1865, *Missions* 6 (1867): 355-56.

based on belief. Churches were also used to exclude prophets and their adherents, creating physical separation between believer and non-believers; Clut also preached against the prophets in the Fort Chipewyan church, reinforcing separation.<sup>136</sup>

Orthodox Christianity, therefore, took place within the church as a site of spiritual authority. But, in reality, indigenous Christians were only present at the mission for a few weeks during the year, spending most time on the land, where they were expected to remain Christians; at York Factory, Winter wrote: "I hope and pray that they may realize the presence of the Saviour in the woods, although cut off from the public services of His house of prayer."<sup>137</sup> Spatial separation developed between personal devotion on the land and public, community service in the mission church; both were important and performed specific functions in the spiritual life of the territory's new Christians. The church was a specifically institutional and community space, separate from, but also guiding, personal worship and piety. For the Oblates, this was further heightened by the linguistic separation between Mass and lay devotion and texts, because the former was in Latin, and the latter in indigenous languages. The church building was the site of institutional community worship where orthodox practice was inculcated through music, liturgy, ritual and instruction.

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<sup>136</sup> Clut to Faraud, 20 May 1862, AD-GLPP-634.

<sup>137</sup> Winter to CMS, [1890], *AL* (1890): 131.

The separation of religious activities into these spheres was spatial, but it was also divided by time, a central missionary concern because of the perceived randomness of indigenous movement.<sup>138</sup> Missionaries explicitly desired to reorient time towards an ordered, Christian norm and, limited on time's economic ramifications in the north, it became primarily centred on religious observance in the church. In the Christian cycle, time was divided by times of prayer, services and religious festivals, specifically Christmas and Easter, in contrast to the non-Christian cycles in indigenous life; because of their explicitly religious focus, these cycles were specifically associated with activities within the church building.<sup>139</sup>

The primary focus was the alteration of yearly migration patterns, as explored in chapter 3. The Christian calendar did not fit with traditional movement and missionaries worked to reorient their converts' movements to Christian seasonal markers.<sup>140</sup> Indigenous people were encouraged to centre their yearly movement around Christian feasts at the mission's church, where they could participate in the standardized rites of Christian community life; the development of Christian communities throughout the territory depended on this gathering.<sup>141</sup> The church aided in the construction of Christian time by becoming a focal point across a vast territory in yearly cycles based on communal

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<sup>138</sup> This was a consistent and continuing concern in Christian missions. See Bambi Schieffelin, "Marking Time: The Dichotomizing Discourse of Multiple Temporalities," *Current Anthropology* 43, no. S4 (2002): S7.

<sup>139</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 171-72; Giodano Nanni, *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 36.

<sup>140</sup> Faraud to [Fabre], 20 May 1873, AD-GLPP-1643.

<sup>141</sup> Vincent to CMS, 31 December 1898, *AL* (1898): 544; Roure to [Faraud], 21 June 1881, AD-GLPPC-27.

religious observance.<sup>142</sup> Time was also viewed as intrinsically civilizing because of its connection to western society, technology, and modes of labour and production.<sup>143</sup>

Time was also ordered around worship services during the day and the week, including the idea of keeping Sunday holy, at and away from the mission. There was flexibility around this issue; Horden, for example, noted that a ban on Sunday hunting in times of need was counterproductive.<sup>144</sup> However, Sabbath observance remained extremely important; the development of portable calendars for indigenous people to mark Sundays attests to it.<sup>145</sup> At the mission, Christians were expected to worship in church on Sundays, but it was a day set aside for lay devotions and prayer regardless of location; participation in church services at the mission set the tone and expectation for Sabbath observance.<sup>146</sup> The day at the mission was also regulated, usually by bells which served to summon Christians into the church for religious services.<sup>147</sup> Grouard reported: “at the sound of the bell, morning and night, these good Christians fill the church, recite the prayers, [and] listen to instructions.”<sup>148</sup> Time, once seemingly unregulated, was ordered through the church and activities within it through yearly, weekly and daily cycles.

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<sup>142</sup> Hovland, “Evangelical Placemaking,” 339.

<sup>143</sup> Nanni, *Time*, 30.

<sup>144</sup> Horden to Wright, 26 January 1852, CMSA-C/C1/O33/4.

<sup>145</sup> Horden to Straith, 1 February 1854, CMSA-C/C1/O33/14A.

<sup>146</sup> Hawksley to CMS, 17 July 1893, *AL* (1893): 422; Frank Russell, *Explorations in the Far North* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1898), 162.

<sup>147</sup> For example: Lecorre Journal, 29 October 1876, *Missions* 15 (1877): 494.

<sup>148</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 50. “...au son de la cloche, matin et soir, ces bons chrétiens replissent l’église, récitent les prières, écoutent les instructions.”

The church was a key player in the drive to convert people to Christianity and create Christian community throughout the north, by defining behaviour and environment through the creation of designated sacred space. Its effects were intended to be felt across the north as people visited the church and returned to the land where missionaries hoped that they would continue to worship. In this way, the land would be brought into the Christian fold, modified, if not physically, then spiritually through the creation of spatial enclaves devoted to spiritual practice. Lecorre wrote of this in his journal in October 1876, after the hanging of a new bell at Fort Resolution, articulating an understanding of the church, its symbols and what it did within the northern landscape; “at the end of two planks,” he wrote, “a bell of about ten pounds, the scared sign of our Redemption, [was] testifying afar that our Divine Master took possession of the lake and the inhabitants of its shores.”<sup>149</sup>

### *Schools*

The church, however, was not the only institutional structure missionaries used. The education of children was deemed integral to the process of Christianization and

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<sup>149</sup>Lecorre Journal, 22 October 1876, 493. “au bout de deux madriers emboîtant une cloche d’une dizaine de livres, le signe sacré de notre Rédemption, attestant au loin que notre divin Maître a pris possession du lac et des habitants de ses rives.”

civilization across the home and foreign missions as a central component of Christian charitable work.<sup>150</sup> Seen as a generation without the cultural preconditioning of their parents, children were the future of Christian communities and education the medium through which they could be taught academic skills alongside Christian beliefs and values.<sup>151</sup> Education could introduce and enforce a new world view on students through its teaching focus and methods, thus raising children in the Christian tradition, regardless of their parents' beliefs.

This need necessarily led to the development of educational facilities, erected across the north throughout the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like churches, schools were not constructed until a mission was stable; by the end of the nineteenth century, there were few dedicated facilities in northern Canada. In early missions, most education was informal and, particularly for the CMS, provided in the home by the missionary wife; it included Bible-focused literacy and vocational skills aimed primarily at girls.<sup>152</sup> Informal schooling was also provided by the Oblates, although they were not an educational order.<sup>153</sup> Catholic schooling was primarily undertaken by the Grey Nuns who had provided schooling and medical aid at Oblate missions since 1844 when Provencher invited them to Red River, establishing subsequent convent-schools at Lac Ste. Anne

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<sup>150</sup> Axelrod, *Schooling*, 3; Prochner et al, "Infant Schools," 85; Tschurenev, "Popular Education," 93-95; E.G. West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1975), 11.

<sup>151</sup> Skeie, *God's Kingdom*, 144.

<sup>152</sup> Kirkby Journal, 2 April 1866, CMSA-C/C1/O39/69; Clut to Fabre, 12 December 1867, AD-GLPP-665.

<sup>153</sup> Huel, "Missionary Strategy," 247.

(1859), Île-à-la-Crosse (1860) and Lac la Biche (1862).<sup>154</sup> By 1870, informal education had begun to shift towards a more formal model with the foundation of day and residential schools.

The earliest education efforts in the north had focused primarily on adult literacy so indigenous converts could read the bible in their own languages. While literacy was regarded as important for spiritual growth, it allowed for indigenous people to continue in devotion while away from the mission through the provision of religious texts, including the Bible, books of prayers and hymns and devotional literature, such as the extremely influential evangelical text, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, translated into Cree by Vincent in 1886.<sup>155</sup> This literacy-focussed education was an explicitly Christianizing endeavour and was exceedingly informal, taking place in the mission house, indigenous camps or HBC forts, and often extended to include HBC employees.<sup>156</sup> This teaching was supplemented with moral instruction, such as the discussion of familial arrangements, and the introduction of some European craft skills, aimed primarily at women.

The goal of adult education was to quickly teach indigenous people the basics of Christian belief while they were present at the mission, usually on a few weeks per year.

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<sup>154</sup> Duchaussois, *Grey Nuns*, 43-60.

<sup>155</sup> See for example: Evans, "Eskimo Literacy," 58-68; Isabel Hofmyer, "Dreams, Documents and "Fetishes": African Christian Interpretations of 'The Pilgrim's Progress'," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no. 4 (2002): 441-42.

<sup>156</sup> Eynard to Vegreville, 12 December 1861, LAC-M-2050.



This focus led to the widespread adoption of the syllabic writing system as an aid to literacy, developed by Evans at Rossville in 1836, which could be rapidly taught and learnt.<sup>157</sup> Most indigenous people saw literacy as beneficial, particularly in their relationship with the HBC; missionaries used this as a vehicle to introduce Christian ideology while learning desirable academic skills.<sup>158</sup>

However, missionaries believed that the future of Christian society lay in the education of children in whom non-Christian habits and beliefs were not yet ingrained, as opposed to adults for whom they believed full conversion was difficult because of their pre-existing beliefs and cultural practices.<sup>159</sup> The school at Providence, Faraud wrote, would have “an immense influence over the religious future of the country”<sup>160</sup>, by training the young as Christian. Grandin, in particular, believed that indigenous adults were incapable of the fundamental change required for transformation into civilized Christians and only through the education of children could true Christian communities develop.<sup>161</sup> This view was not limited to northern Canada. In 1836, the British Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes noted on the subject of schooling that: “the better educated, the more clearly will they [indigenous people] see that the principles of the Bible are the best principles for the government of individuals, of

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<sup>157</sup> Robert Mason, “The Sound of Innovation: James Evans’ Syllabic Alphabet,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1994): 849.

<sup>158</sup> Den Otter, *Wilderness*, 62.

<sup>159</sup> Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers*, 180-81; Prucha, “Two Roads,” 133; Prochner et al, “Infant Schools,” 84.

<sup>160</sup> Faraud to [Fabre], 20 May 1873, AD-GLPP-1643. “...une immense influence sur l’avenir religieux du pays...”

<sup>161</sup> Champagne, *Grandin*, 186.

families, of tribes and nations.”<sup>162</sup> Education reinforced evangelism and Christian teaching, but also extended beyond religion to encompass social and economic ideology, as “another step in the process of civilization”<sup>163</sup> and an integral aspect of global mission, Catholic and Protestant alike, in the aim to transform indigenous societies.

At their most basic, educational programmes were intended to provide “a sound Christian education”<sup>164</sup> including literacy and Christian doctrine.<sup>165</sup> Generally, subjects included “reading, spelling and tables”<sup>166</sup>, as well as music, as part of a package of basic academic education, but with a continual focus on the application of these skills to religion.<sup>167</sup> In Anglican schools, specifically, “[s]pecial attention is paid to Scripture – reading hoping thereby to influence the young minds in the path of holiness and virtue”<sup>168</sup> with the aim “to train up [children] in the nurture and admiration of the Lord.”<sup>169</sup> Literacy was taught in indigenous languages as well as English or French, although most of the convent schools were taught in French because few nuns spoke

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<sup>162</sup> *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes* (London: William Ball, 1837), 98.

<sup>163</sup> Edward Cook quoted in *Means of Civilization*, 168.

<sup>164</sup> Reeve to Young, Easter 1889, PAA-A.281/227.

<sup>165</sup> Gascon to Faraud, 26 November 1867, AD-GLPPC-12; Lecorre to [Faraud], 14 January 1889, AD-GLPPC-18.

<sup>166</sup> Nevitt to CMS, December 1886, AL (1886), 294.

<sup>167</sup> Hawksley to CMS, 26 November 1900, AL (1901): 886; Faraud to Cox, 1 April 1868, AD-HPF4191.C75-35.

<sup>168</sup> Hawksley to CMS, 26 November 1900, 886.

<sup>169</sup> Kirkby Journal, 20 August 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/64.

indigenous languages.<sup>170</sup> Many missionaries believed indigenous children should learn both, in order to interact with both their own communities and the growing non-indigenous population to the south.

But education was not limited to academic skills because schools were seen as vital tools for improvement and progress.<sup>171</sup> Although primarily teaching reading and writing, Vincent noted that, at Fort Albany, he taught children “whatever else might be useful in life”<sup>172</sup> without specifying what that was. Grandin noted that to teach “the Indian child to read, to write, to sing..., this will not be enough.”<sup>173</sup> Writing this after his move south to Saint-Albert, Grandin wanted indigenous children to learn vocational skills to contribute to the growth of civilized communities, including farming, woodworking and blacksmithing for boys and sewing, cooking and housekeeping for girls. These foci responded to missionary ideas about Christianity and civilization, as well as ingrained ideas about gender roles which were integrated into girls’ education across the global mission field.<sup>174</sup>

For the Oblates, in particular, schools were integral for introducing gender norms and domestic values. Because of the difficulty as a celibate male order in demonstrating this

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<sup>170</sup> McCarthy, “Theory,” 262.

<sup>171</sup> Bompas to Fenn, 13 November 1882, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1883/38; *Proceedings* (1820): 371.

<sup>172</sup> Vincent to CMS, 31 December 1898, *AL* (1898): 544.

<sup>173</sup> Grandin, “Les missions sauvages,” 128. “...l’enfant sauvage à lire, à écrire, à chanter...cela ne suffira...”

<sup>174</sup> Rogers, “Teaching Morality,” 74; Tanya Fitzgerald, “Jumping the Fences: Maori Women’s Resistance to Missionary Schooling in Northern New Zealand,” *Paedagogia Historica* 37 (2000): 182.

model, Oblates relied on the convent schools and the Grey Nuns, a standard division of labour with regard to education throughout Catholic missions.<sup>175</sup> Although the Oblates taught children informally, they felt that instruction in non-academic subjects, especially for girls, was best undertaken by nuns.<sup>176</sup> Discussing with Faraud the establishment of the Providence convent, Grandin explained:

...a school we would undertake ourselves will never be anything, civilization penetrates the family only by the mother, and it will not be a Father or Brother who can form the mothers of Christian families...the good they [nuns] do has more impact.<sup>177</sup>

Schools were explicitly intended to extend beyond academic teaching to social, economic and cultural instruction. George Holmes, who established the school at Lesser Slave Lake in 1887, believed that academic education alone was not enough to “raise him [the indigenous person] in the social scale” and that “industrial and thorough religious training”<sup>178</sup> were also integral for the growth of civilized, Christian communities.<sup>179</sup>

Missionaries believed education contributed to the growth a Christian society as a whole. Mazenod articulated this in his *Instructions*, noting that education would assist in

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<sup>175</sup> See for example: Sarah A. Curtis, *Civilising Habits: Women Missionaries and the Revival of French Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 185.

<sup>176</sup> Gascon to Faraud, 20 October 1861, AD-GLPPC-12.

<sup>177</sup> Grandin to Faraud, 30 March 1863, AD-GLPPC-39. “l’école que nous ferons par nous mêmes ne sera jamais rien la ne pénètre dans la famille que par le mère et ce ne sera ni un père ni un frère qui pourra former des mères de familles...le bien qu’elles font a plus de retentissements.”

<sup>178</sup> George Holmes to CMS, 13 December 1891, AL (1892): 182.

<sup>179</sup> Spendlove to CMS, 20 August 1892, AL (1892): 183; Clut to Faraud, 18 May 1881, AD-GLPP-785.

the development of an indigenous society which participated in European behavioural and social norms.<sup>180</sup> He wrote:

...given that the prosperity of civil societies is intimately linked to the instruction of youth, there must be, opened in each mission as much as possible, a school, where...the children will learn, along with the rudiments of Christian doctrine, secular knowledge and that which is appropriate to know about the arts of daily life.<sup>181</sup>

Mazenod believed that education encouraged the growth of “civil society” amongst indigenous people. This was not just participation in moral and behavioural norms, but also a wider integration into the Christian nation-state, where the lawless existence missionaries saw in indigenous society was replaced by one grounded in law, order and regulated behaviour. This idea existed across denominational bounds; in 1900, then-Bishop of Mackenzie River, William Day Reeve, like Mazenod, saw the role of education as “training up children to be loyal subjects of our Sovereign and to be useful members of society...in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”<sup>182</sup>

After their education, missionaries intended that children return to their communities and lay the foundation of Christian society by remaining faithful Christians who upheld

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<sup>180</sup> Smith, “Aggressive Civilization,” 262.

<sup>181</sup> Mazenod, *Instructions*, 13. “Néanmoins, étant donné que la prospérité des sociétés est intimement liée à l’instruction de la jeunesse, il faudra, autant que possible, ouvrir dans chaque mission, une école, où...les enfants apprendront avec les rudiments de la doctrine chrétienne, les connaissances humaines et ce qu’il convient de savoir des arts de la vie courante.”

<sup>182</sup> Reeve to B. Baring-Gould, November 1900, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1901/28.

behavioural standard and encouraging others to do the same. As Grandin termed it, the goal was “to civilize the Indians by [their] small children.”<sup>183</sup> Similarly, Holmes reflected:

Our Indian homes are what might be termed ‘spiritual nurseries’ which exist for these young children, like plants, for future fruit-bearing. They are to be transplanted from the nursery to different parts of the country, there, we trust by God’s grace...to become real fruit-bearers.<sup>184</sup>

Although there was concern that children returning to their communities would return to a wilderness state, missionaries hoped that, instead, they would “carry the ‘light’ [of Christianity] to their homes”, by modelling belief and raising Christian families.<sup>185</sup> This burden fell particularly on girls who, as future mothers, were encouraged to “form all-Christian families who will maintain civilization and, above all, the faith.”<sup>186</sup> Education was seen as having a present and future impact, to establish an educated, Christian population which would grow and maintain religious and Euro-Canadian social norms, and eventually, a corresponding economic and settlement structure.

Most missionaries also hoped that schools would find candidates for the ministry to be sent for theological training, thereby forming the backbone of an indigenous church.

Although both organizations aimed to develop an indigenous ministry, its growth was more actively encouraged by the CMS because of the mandate for indigenous leadership

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<sup>183</sup> Grandin, “Les missions des sauvages,” 141. “...la civilisation des sauvages pour les petits enfants.”

<sup>184</sup> Holmes to CMS, 27 November 1903, *AL* (1903): 741.

<sup>185</sup> Lépire, “L’École Industrielle de Dunbow,” *Missions* 40 (1902) : 176. See also: Burstyn, *Ideal of Womanhood*, 33-36.

<sup>186</sup> Quoted in Abel, *Drum Songs*, 117.

under Venn's "native church" policy.<sup>187</sup> Their early and continuing practice of training indigenous people as missionaries and teachers is probably best exemplified by the work of Henry Budd, educated at Red River by John West, who established the mission at The Pas and was seen as an example of what indigenous agents could achieve.<sup>188</sup> The CMS explicitly viewed indigenous people as more suited to itinerating amongst indigenous camps than their European counterparts being seen as more adaptable to a nomadic lifestyle.<sup>189</sup> Although the CMS had some successes, they were ultimately less successful than they hoped; they were, however, more successful than the Oblates, who did not ordain an indigenous priest until the twentieth century.

Two types of facilities were developed to provide educational services: day and residential schools. Day schools were primarily run by the CMS, although the Oblates also provided some day education.<sup>190</sup> Like the informal schools of the mission house, children attended lessons focussed primarily on academic skills and Christian catechism when their families were present at the mission. During this time, missionaries

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<sup>187</sup> David Nock, *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs Cultural Replacement* (Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1988), 33; McCarthy, *Great River*, 97; Raeburn Lange, "Indigenous Agents of Religious Change in New Zealand, 1830-1860," *Journal of Religious History* 24, no. 3 (2000): 279-80.

<sup>188</sup> Pettipas, "Henry Budd," 41-50; John S. Long, "Budd's Native Contemporaries in James Bay: Men of 'Refined Feelings', Representatives of 'The Whiteman's Civilization' and 'Real Bush Indians'," *JCHS* 33, no. 1 (1991): 79.

<sup>189</sup> Whitehouse, "Native," 86-87; Winona Stevenson, "'Our Man in the Field': The Status and Role of a CMS Native Catechist in Rupert's Land," *JCHS* 33, no. 1 (1991): 67; Horden to Hutchinson, 9 September 1872, CMSA-C/C1/O33/116.

<sup>190</sup> Petitot to [Fabre], September 1863, *Missions* 6 (1867): 371.

undertook a period of frenzied teaching.<sup>191</sup> There was little non-academic instruction because there were neither the facilities nor time to do so, the major exception being needlework skills for girls as part of the continued emphasis on gender roles. Although sporadic, day schools were nevertheless viewed as an important starting point in childhood education and the inculcation of Euro-Canadian, Christian ideology.

However, both organizations explicitly preferred boarding schools. Attendance at day schools was erratic as children attended only when their parents were at the mission and viewed as a hindrance to academic achievement.<sup>192</sup> Boarding schools, by contrast, ensured continuous attendance and instruction which resulted in, presumably, a greater measure of success.<sup>193</sup> Both groups established boarding schools, but they were more central to the Catholic missions because of their reliance on the nuns' established system of conventual schooling.

Boarding schools also allowed missionaries to more effectively inculcate ideas about civilization and societal change because the children were consistently under their care where missionaries could mould and regulate belief and behaviour.<sup>194</sup> Specifically, missionaries believed a deep-rooted Christian character was more effectively developed

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<sup>191</sup> Canham to Bompas, 9 February 1888, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1888/157.

<sup>192</sup> Vincent to CMS, 21 September 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O70/5.

<sup>193</sup> Faraut to [Fabre], 20 May 1873, AD-GLPP-1643.

<sup>194</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 177.



when children were separated from their parents.<sup>195</sup> Holmes expressed this view clearly, stating:

...the more I see of the home life of the Indian, the more I am convinced that our homes are the only means of saving the children. The whole atmosphere of the camp is polluted with immorality and, humanely speaking, it is impossible for any child to grow up pure in heart or mind under such influences.<sup>196</sup>

In contrast to the perceived immorality of indigenous homes, Holmes believed that boarding schools provided a consistently Christian atmosphere in which to teach and model values and behaviours. Hygiene was modeled and enforced with the hope that children would grow up seeing cleanliness as an integral aspect of Christian life.<sup>197</sup> Residential schools aimed to lay the foundations for a Christian society by raising children in a physical and ideological environment based around a Euro-Canadian framework; this was in contrast to work amongst adults where more emphasis was placed on adaptation to northern needs and realities.

These schools developed in parallel with the Canadian federal residential school system, established in the early 1880s in southern Canada. Given that many of the southern schools were government-funded but run by the CMS and the Oblates, there were parallels in their goals and mandates, particularly the importance of Christianization and the modification of indigenous “character” and economic activities; most southern

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<sup>195</sup> McCarthy, “Theory,” 263.

<sup>196</sup> Holmes to CMS, 30 December 1895, *AL* (1895): 568.

<sup>197</sup> Faraud to Clut, 24 January 1862, AD-GLPPC-10.

schools were based around a farm, where children were forced to learn agricultural skills for future settlement.<sup>198</sup> This type of educational system, both espoused by missionaries and re-emphasized by the federal government through the Davin Report (1879), aimed to assimilate indigenous people into the growing non-indigenous majority in the southern part of the country. The Report, written by Canadian civil servant Nicholas Flood Davin, was based on “aggressive civilization”<sup>199</sup> policies enacted in the United States, emphasizing residential—as opposed to day—schools as the way to transform indigenous society through childhood education and vocational training; in writing the report, Davin consulted with Taché, amongst others, demonstrating the clear overlap in church and state policy.<sup>200</sup> These schools were viewed as the best method for assimilating indigenous children, by removing them “from the degrading surroundings of their pagan homes and placed under the direct influence of all that is noblest and best in our Christian civilization.”<sup>201</sup> The government-associated schools actively aimed to extinguish indigenous culture, including language, through reorientation of lifestyle and belief; in many ways, this was also the intent of mission education although it was framed and presented differently.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 134.

<sup>199</sup> Nicholas Flood Davin, *Report on the Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds* (1879), 1.

<sup>200</sup> Davin, *Report*, 9; Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 101-102; Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man's Club: Schools, Race and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 163-64.

<sup>201</sup> *The Act and Proceedings of the Fifteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Presbyterian Review Print, 1889), xvii.

<sup>202</sup> Scott, “Penitential,” 113; Nock, *Victorian Missionary*, 5; Francis, “Civilizing,” 83.

The northern schools, however, were not formally associated with the federal system until the signing of Treaty 8 in 1899.<sup>203</sup> These treaties included educational provisions and, like their missionary forerunners, promoted basic academic education combined with vocational skills, although, for the government the goal was explicitly to remove the so-called “problem” of indigenous people to facilitate Euro-Canadian economic and societal growth.<sup>204</sup> However, most northern schools remained independent until the twentieth century.<sup>205</sup> Although many received sporadic federal grants, missionaries retained autonomy to steer the direction of the schools and to adapt to the unique issues they faced.<sup>206</sup> As with northern missions in general, the farming model was unsuitable and there was little expectation of the establishment of agricultural communities; assimilation was also nearly redundant because there were virtually no settlers until the late 1890s.<sup>207</sup> Schools developed with these limitations in mind and their programmes were intended to address the issues of the implementation of Christianity and civilization inherent in the northern mission field.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Numbered Treaties 9 (1905-06; 1929-30), 10 (1906), and 11 (1921) and the extension of Treaty 5 (1908) brought the most of the rest of the northern mission schools under federal jurisdiction.

<sup>204</sup> See for example, D.C. Scott and S. Stewart, “Education: Treaty 9,” 1905, in Long, *Treaty 9*, 313-14. See also: Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert and Don McCaskill, “The Legacy of the Past: An Overview,” in *Indian Education in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 1:5; Agnes Grant, *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1996), 64.

<sup>205</sup> A.D. Fisher, “A Colonial Education System: Historical Changes and Schooling at Fort Chipewyan,” *Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (1981): 39.

<sup>206</sup> Newnham to Venn, 20 September 20 September 1893, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1893/21.

<sup>207</sup> The push for assimilation occurred primarily in the Yukon in the late nineteenth century after the Klondike Gold Rush. Rutherford, *White Man’s God*, 111-13.

<sup>208</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Canada’s Residential Schools*, vol. 2, *The Inuit and Northern Experience*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015), 14.

One major issue they faced was attendance.<sup>209</sup> In southern schools, the federal government began to exert control over enforcing attendance at many schools associated with reserves.<sup>210</sup> Outside treaty areas, however, this did not occur and parents were often unwilling to leave their children at the boarding schools; while the CMS found that day schools were usually received with enthusiasm, boarding schools were not. Generally, indigenous people were interested in education, but only insofar as it could be integrated into their cultural and economic needs, something which day schools could provide.<sup>211</sup> The situation was summarized by W. J. Garton, whose teaching efforts around Fort Rae were meeting with limited success. He wrote to the CMS:

It would be a great step if we could get hold of the Indian children to teach; but the parents are not agreeable to this; they say it unfits them for life in the woods. This life in the woods is against us and until this mode of living comes to an end, the missionary must teach when and where he can, accompanying his teaching with earnest prayer that throne of grace.<sup>212</sup>

Both groups of missionaries struggled to convince parents to leave their children at boarding facilities.<sup>213</sup> As a result, most early boarding schools were attended primarily by orphans cared for by the mission staff or from the fact that missions often fostered

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<sup>209</sup> Long, "Western James Bay," 107.

<sup>210</sup> Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 96-100.

<sup>211</sup> Kirkby to CMS, 27 September 1855, CMSA-C/C1/O39/55; Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 98. For a perspective on indigenous participation in schooling, see Hope MacLean, "Ojibwa Participation in Methodist Residential Schools in Upper Canada, 1828-1860," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 25, no. 1 (2005): 94-137.

<sup>212</sup> W.J. Garton to CMS, 7 November 1887, AL (1887): 285.

<sup>213</sup> "Extracts of Letters of Providence Nuns to Mother Superior," *Rapport* (1871), 22.

orphaned indigenous children.<sup>214</sup>This eventually changed, but remained a recurring issue into the twentieth century.

Northern schools also faced the problem of provisioning. Most did not have the supplies, nor the means of growing them, to support a large group of children. Vincent wrote frequently about his desire for indigenous children to stay at Fort Albany for instruction but was similarly clear that the mission did not have the resources for it.<sup>215</sup> Farming was the obvious solution, but could realistically only be achieved in some areas. While some schools, including Hay River, grew much of their own food, others faced enormous difficulties. The convent-school at Providence had serious provisioning problems because the gardens established by Grandin were only sporadically successful. The school faced near-starvation conditions periodically throughout the 1870s and 1880s and there were suggestions that it would close.<sup>216</sup>Provisioning issues were a severe limitation and, alongside parents' disinterest in residential facilities, resulted in a small school system with greater focus on seasonal day education.

Nevertheless, education remained a priority, but how it was carried out needed to be tailored to northern circumstances. As Duchaussois noted, children were "destined to go

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<sup>214</sup> Long, *Treaty 9*, 307.

<sup>215</sup> Vincent to CMS, 21 September 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O70/5.

<sup>216</sup> Ladet to [Faraud], 27 October 1881, AD-GLPPC-18.

back to the wigwam”<sup>217</sup> and education needed to suit that. Similarly, after visiting Shingwauk Industrial Home near Sault Ste. Marie in 1875, Horden was full of praise for the school, but also recognized that this model was not suited for Moose Factory because “Moosonee will always have its hunters, seeing that most of the land is good for nothing.”<sup>218</sup> Although missionaries aimed for agricultural-based facilities where possible, Stringer, for example, noted that it was “a great mistake to force the Indian to give up his particular habits and adopt others that may not be suitable”<sup>219</sup> referring specifically to economic activity. This did not negate the desire for settled communities, but rather recognized that agriculture was not well-suited to some areas. As a result, educational efforts often had to look elsewhere for vocational training to encourage children to become “civilized” Christians.

This understanding, named by historian Robert Carney as “the native-wilderness equation”<sup>220</sup>, saw a near-future for indigenous communities on the land and a need for childhood education to suit that reality. Missionaries understood the north as a place where the traditional economy, at present, would be tempered by Christian beliefs, moral values, social structures and conceptions of time, as part the gradual evolution of Christian communities. They did, however, see the potential for the future development

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<sup>217</sup> Duchaussois, *Grey Nuns*, 236.

<sup>218</sup> Horden to Fenn, 22 August 1883, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1883/170. See also: Horden to Wright, 4 October 1875, CMSA-C/C1/O2D/13.

<sup>219</sup> Stringer, “The Church’s Responsibility to the Aborigines of North America,” 1908, GSA-M74-3/1-C-1.

<sup>220</sup> Carney, “Native-Wilderness,” 64.

of a more regulated, but non-agrarian economy, encouraged through teaching different vocational skills.<sup>221</sup> The focus of northern schools remained the inculcation of values and beliefs, alongside some vocational skills which missionaries believed were potentially useful; an emphasis on character, belief and behaviour was still regarded as civilizing, and religion itself progressive.<sup>222</sup> Academic skills, particularly reading, were also viewed as civilizing to some degree because of their effect in raising children's character and skills.<sup>223</sup> Effectively, students were taught to "lead good Christian lives"<sup>224</sup>, based on integral values, summarized by Lucas as "truth and honesty, love to God and men, the dignity of labour, habits of cleanliness, [and] preservation of health."<sup>225</sup>

However, missionaries were aware that any educational efforts needed to be sanctioned by the HBC, although their influence gradually decreased throughout the late-nineteenth century. On the issue, the Company's attitude was decidedly mixed, because education was also made available to the children of Company employees. Company policy suggested that children should be educated if possible, but this was not a priority.<sup>226</sup> The Company did provide funds for missionaries to establish schools around Red River, in order to provide a structured education to their employees' children

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<sup>221</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 107-109.

<sup>222</sup> Grouard, "Vicariat du Mackenzie," *Missions* 38 (1900): 87.

<sup>223</sup> Prochner et al, "Infant Schooling," 100.

<sup>224</sup> Duchassois, *Grey Nuns*, 237.

<sup>225</sup> Lucas to CMS, n.d., *Letters from the Front* (1911): 265.

<sup>226</sup> "Minutes of Council, 1833" in E.H. Oliver, *The Canadian North-West: Its Early Development and Legislative Records: Minutes of the Councils of the Red River Colony and the Northern Department of Rupert's Land* (Ottawa: Government Printer, 1914-15) 2:756.

without having to leave the territory; the Grey Nuns were brought to St.-Boniface for this reason.<sup>227</sup>

The Company was less enthusiastic about educating indigenous children, concerned that academically-successful indigenous people could disrupt their business model.<sup>228</sup>

Although providing funding for the establishment and erection of schools, some viewed indigenous education extremely negatively; Simpson, specifically, felt that education made indigenous people disinterested in trapping and was, therefore, negative for the Company.<sup>229</sup> Simpson was also concerned that schools, particularly boarding schools, would “collect the Indians about the Mission”<sup>230</sup>, interfering with Company business and straining resources.

At the same time, some officers saw a potentially positive impact, particularly in the provision of orphans. For example, in 1866, Kirkby and Bompas met with Chief Trader William Hardisty, himself a product of the CMS school at Red River, to make arrangements for the construction of an orphanage and school for children orphaned by recent sickness, with the intention to eventually extend this scheme elsewhere as a joint project.<sup>231</sup> It is not clear if the orphanage was fully constructed, but it

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<sup>227</sup> *Select Committee* (1857), 305.

<sup>228</sup> Carney, “Holy Angels,” 295.

<sup>229</sup> “Minutes of Council, 1840” in *Canadian North-West*, vol. 2, 830; M. P. Toombs, “Educational Policy of the Hudson’s Bay Company,” *Saskatchewan History* 4, no. 1 (1951): 8.

<sup>230</sup> Simpson to Ross, 16 June 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/58.

<sup>231</sup> Kirkby to Dawes, 3 June 1866, CMSA-C/C1/O39/36.



demonstrated the potential for cooperation between the two on educational matters.<sup>232</sup> Similarly, a positive impression of the Catholic programme at Providence encouraged local officers to donate to its upkeep.<sup>233</sup> In fact, the support of local officers convinced Faraud to initially go ahead with the opening of the Providence school after initial concerns over funding.<sup>234</sup> The HBC sometimes helped with construction, such as at Moose Factory where Miles erected a small schoolhouse in the 1850s.<sup>235</sup>

Because northern schools provided for indigenous, Métis and white children, the HBC was more likely to support them. For missionaries, racially mixed education was not viewed as problematic because, they saw all northern children, regardless of race, as “backward”<sup>236</sup> and in need of Christianization and civilization. Both Métis and non-indigenous parents took full advantage of this and enrolled their children in the schools.<sup>237</sup> Unlike in federal schools, education was common for all children and often conducted in multiple languages.<sup>238</sup> When indigenous families were away from the posts, most day schools taught only non-indigenous and Métis children and, as a result, facility growth was sometimes driven by HBC families.<sup>239</sup> However, most employees were only

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<sup>232</sup> Kirkby to Dawes, 30 November 1866, CMSA-C/C1/O39/38.

<sup>233</sup> Faraud to Cox, 5 May 1869, AD-HPF4191.C75-37.

<sup>234</sup> Faraud to [Fabre], 20 May 1873, AD-GLPP-1643.

<sup>235</sup> Horden to Knight, 2 February 1854, CMSA-C/C1/O33/15.

<sup>236</sup> Nevitt to CMS, December 1886, *AL* (1886), 294.

<sup>237</sup> McCarthy, “Theory,” 269; Kirkby Journal, 12 September 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/64; Lecorre to [Faraud], 3 December 1878, AD-GLPPC-18.

<sup>238</sup> Long, “Education,” 84; Gascon to Faraud, 26 November 1867, AD-GLPPC-12.

<sup>239</sup> Horden to Venn, 10 February 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O33/111; Reeve to CMS, November 1899, *AL* (1899), 710.



5.22: Fort Selkirk School. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7561-45*

willing to support local schools so that their children would be close to home, contributing to the growth of day schools.<sup>240</sup>

Although a significant amount of teaching took place in mission houses, missionaries worked to establish designated faculties wherever possible. The most basic facilities were day schools, usually a one-room structure only for academic teaching. One of their primary functions was to move education out of the mission house, into a dedicated, explicitly educational space.<sup>241</sup> There is no evidence that the Oblates constructed

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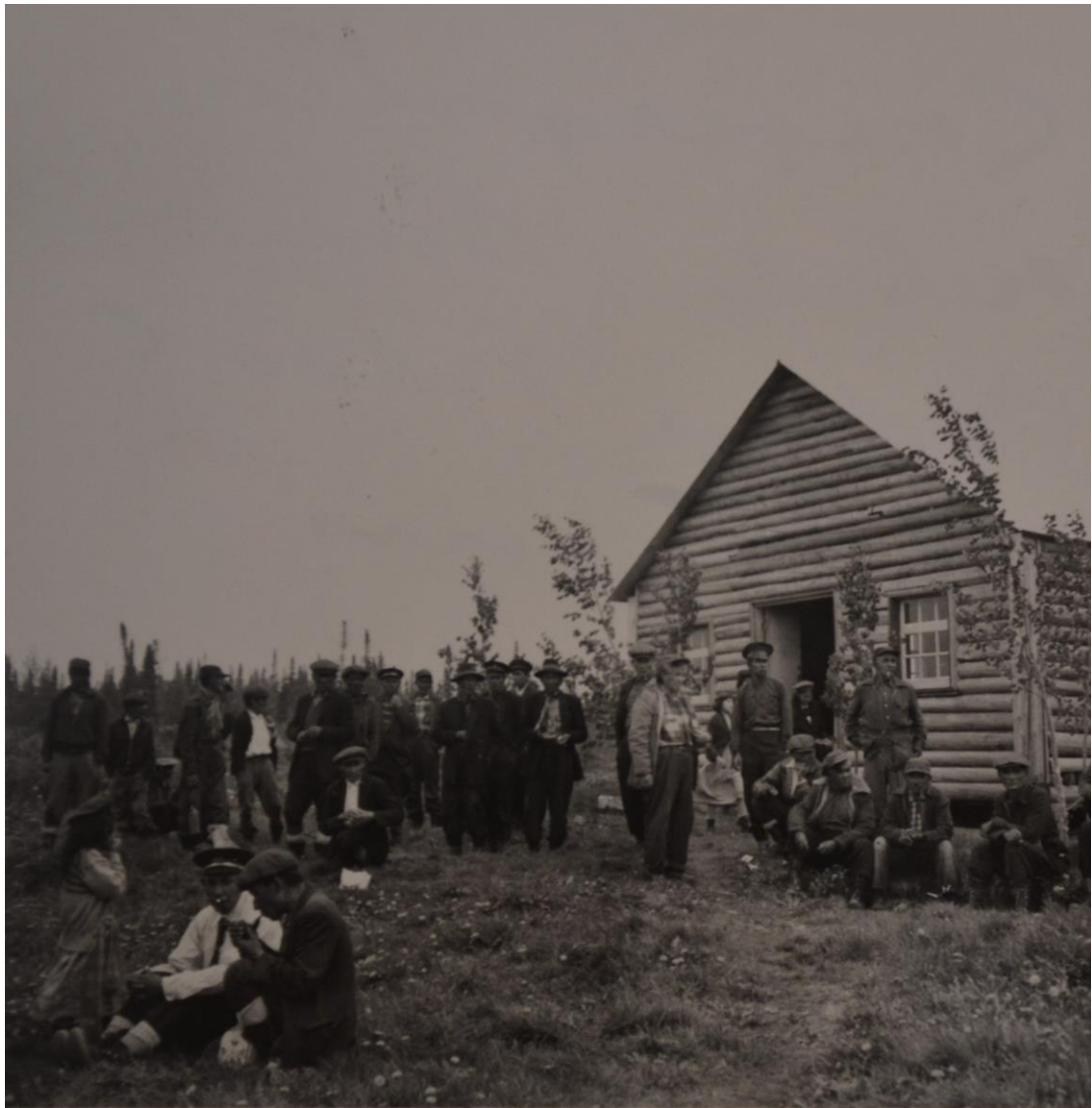
<sup>240</sup> Hardisty to Faraud, 11 November 1865, HBCA-B.200/b/35.

<sup>241</sup> This was not just an issue in North America. See, for example: Smith, "Hohi," 615.



**5.23:** Fort Albany School. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7543-8*

purpose-built day schools, rather teaching informally in the mission house. Although few survive, day schools were constructed at many CMS missions. They were architecturally indistinctive, with practicality foremost in mind. The Fort Selkirk school, constructed by Canham in 1892 (fig.5.22), is typical. A log building with a single interior space, it also served as a church until the 1930s. Although differing architecturally very little from other buildings at the post, it provided, along with the mission house, a distinctly Christian space for the inculcation of knowledge and values. Its architectural form made little difference to its ability to function in this capacity beyond the ideological and practical need for permanence. That similar buildings can be found in surviving



**5.24:** Mistassini School. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7543-85*

photographs from Fort Albany (fig. 5.23) and Mistassini (fig.5.24), for example, shows the need for a dedicated, but not architecturally-distinctive, building. A 1905 day school at Moose Factory (fig.5.25) is more distinct, with a vaguely-Gothic entrance porch and arched glass panel above the door; this building is one of several iterations of the Moose Factory school, first completed in the 1850s and periodically replaced. Nevertheless, the



5.25: Moose Factory Day School, c.1890s. *Library and Archives Canada, C073232*

layout and function of the Moose Factory school remained the same as its counterpart at Fort Selkirk.

Residential schools were major educational architectural projects for both denominations, but there were few by the end of the century. A number of Anglican day schools, including Moose Factory, had some residential provision, but that was not their focus, despite the desire to board students in some capacity.<sup>242</sup> All residential schools strove for the same thing: to raise children as Christian citizens. Their architecture enabled them to do so by providing practical and ideological space for residence and

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<sup>242</sup>Horden to Knight, 2 February 1854, CMSA-C/C1/O33/15; Horden to Venn, 15 January 1862, CMSA-C/C1/O33/108.



**5.26:** Choooutla Residential School, Carcross, after 1911. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7517-211*

Christian instruction. They were also able to accommodate vocational activities and thus were viewed as a more effective way of both educating and civilizing children.

The schools' architecture varied between the two denominations, reflecting their development and operation. The Anglican facilities generally developed organically from an initial residential structure, sometimes an early mission house, and were initially smaller because the CMS also operated multiple day schools. Architecturally, they were often spread over multiple structures, gradually constructed as the school expanded; the initial school at Carcross, for example, included several small log buildings; a singular





**5.27:** Hay River Residential School. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-254*

facility was not erected until 1911 after federal government involvement (fig.5.26).<sup>243</sup> Similarly, at Hay River, a large school constructed in 1917 (fig.5.27) under treaty funding replaced a collection of smaller buildings constructed throughout the 1890s including dormitories, classrooms and auxiliary structures. This piecemeal approach was primarily resultant from a lack of labour.<sup>244</sup> Residential education could not be provided until buildings were constructed and the difficulty in erecting them made the transition from day to boarding facilities problematic.<sup>245</sup> Until the involvement of the Canadian

<sup>243</sup> Ken Coates, "A Very Imperfect Means of Education: Indian Day Schools in the Yukon Territory, 1890-1955," in *Indian Education*, 1:137.

<sup>244</sup> Reeve to Baring-Gould, November 1900, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1901/28.

<sup>245</sup> Gardiner to Venn, 10 September 1856, CMSA-C/C1/O23/4.



**5.28:** Residential School, former Bishop's residence, Moose Factory. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7538-985A*

government, this was standard CMS approach; even at Moose Factory, Moosonee's episcopal seat, the boarding school established in 1905 was run out of the Bishop's old house (fig.5.28).<sup>246</sup>

Catholic facilities had a dual purpose of housing the Grey Nuns and providing educational space. These buildings also often included medical facilities, run by the Sisters. Unlike the CMS, the presence of lay brothers allowed for the construction of larger and more architecturally-distinctive buildings. They reflected wider trends in the

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<sup>246</sup> "Letters from Different Stations," *Moosonee Mailbag* 11 (April 1900): 90-95; Long, *Treaty 9*, 307.





5.29: Original Residential School, Providence. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-250-N007*

Grey Nuns' architecture across North America, with convents designed on a non-cloistered model, reflecting an outward-looking, service-based ideology.<sup>247</sup> The original residential facility was at Providence (fig.5.29) where Grandin aimed to construct a large school, orphanage and hospital.<sup>248</sup> The two-storey main building, at 45 by 25 feet, was completed in 1864.<sup>249</sup> It was the largest ecclesiastical building in the north constructed

<sup>247</sup> Tanya Martin, "The Mother House of the Grey Nuns: A Building History," *JSSAC* 24, no. 2 (1999): 40.

<sup>248</sup> Grandin Journal, 26 August 1861, *Missions* 2 (1863):224.

<sup>249</sup> Grandin Journal, 13 July 1864, *Missions* 5 (1866):401.

to date, but the need to house both the nuns and provide a conventual boarding school made it necessary.<sup>250</sup> It opened officially in 1867 with 11 students.

The original structure was large but basic. It was replaced by a second, similar convent in 1899 under the direction of Gabriel Breynat and enlarged in 1917 (fig.5.30).<sup>251</sup> The 1899 building was similar to its 1864 predecessor, but more stylistically distinctive, speaking to the increasing influence of the Catholic Church in the Mackenzie region. This and the convent-school at Fort Chipewyan (1874; fig.5.31) were consistent with conventual architecture throughout western Canada, and subsequent northern developments, including at Fort Resolution in 1903 and its 1909 replacement (fig. 5.32). There are clear architectural distinctions between the Catholic and Anglican schools, reflecting denominational and operational differences, although not their mandate. The established Catholic hierarchy permitted institutional effort in architectural development and Taché's early liaisons with the Grey Nuns allowed the two organizations, although administratively separate, to develop schools more centrally and effectively than their Anglican counterparts. Funding also played a role. The CMS periodically struggled with central finances and never made North America its priority,

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<sup>250</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 68.

<sup>251</sup> Duchaussois, *Grey Nuns*, 139.



5.30: Providence Residential School, after 1900. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-250-N005*



5.31: Holy Angels Convent School, Fort Chipewyan. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-102543*



**5.32:** Fort Resolution Convent School, after 1909. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-250-N001*

while the Catholic schools were primarily funded through l'Oeuvre de la Sainte-Enfance, part of the overall Catholic funding machine.<sup>252</sup> Central and relatively consistent funding allowed the Catholic missions to develop larger, better-staffed and more permanent facilities than their Protestant rivals.<sup>253</sup> The focus of the Oblates in establishing "a religious institution in a large central mission"<sup>254</sup> speaks to this wider understanding of centralized systems within a wider Catholic framework. Catholic institutions were almost

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<sup>252</sup> Huel, *Taché*, 98; Sophie Heywood, "Missionary Children: The French Holy Childhood Association in European Context, 1843-c.1914," *European History Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (2015): 446-66.

<sup>253</sup> Clut to Faraut, 20 March 1871, AD-GLPP-690.

<sup>254</sup> Clut to [Faraut], 15 February 1869, AD-GLPP-673. "un établissement religieuses dans une grande mission centrale."

always contextualized within the larger structure of the church, whereas the Anglican facilities, particularly early ones, were often referred to as “homes”, consistent with their architectural manifestation.

Schools, for both organizations, were a central aspect of nineteenth-century ideas about charity as applied to wider programmes for schooling the poor.<sup>255</sup> Specifically for the Oblates, schools were only one aspect of wider Catholic charitable efforts, and the nuns also provided other services, specifically medical aid.<sup>256</sup> The Grey Nuns’ strength in the northern field lay in their wide range of charitable endeavours, as opposed to purely teaching orders.<sup>257</sup> While the Oblates informally provided medical services, conventual architecture focused charitable services into a single facility, positioning the church as a service provider through identifiable, centralized architecture specifically devoted to Catholic charity, and consistent with the Grey Nuns’ practice elsewhere.<sup>258</sup> Although hospitals generally moved into dedicated structures in the twentieth century—the first such hospital was opened at Fort Smith in 1914—nineteenth-century charitable institutions were under one roof: the convent-school. The distinctive style of convent schools, particularly later ones, using classical forms with outward facing façades defined them as pillars of charity, differentiated from but intimately tied to the overall

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<sup>255</sup> Sarah A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 2000), 34-35; Kathleen Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of their Social Work in the Victorian Era* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), 69-70; A. Olichon, *Les missions: histoire de l’expansion du catholicisme dans le monde* (Paris: Bloud and Guy, 1936), 332.

<sup>256</sup> Grandin to Mazenod, 1860, AD-GLPP-1767.

<sup>257</sup> Séguin to [Faraud], 28 July 1864, AD-GLPPC-29.

<sup>258</sup> Martin, “Charity,” xxxii.

Catholic mission, providing education and services as part of the drive to build a Catholic society.<sup>259</sup>

Stylistic differences set the Catholic convent-schools apart from their Protestant counterparts, important within the context of denominational conflict. Because educational facilities were aimed at developing Christian communities, both the CMS and OMI saw educating children as integral to assuring their future allegiance and ensuring their salvation through religious orthodoxy.<sup>260</sup> As early as 1860, Grollier wrote to Taché of the importance of denominational education, concerned that children being educated informally by Kirkby at Fort Simpson were “growing up the victims of Protestant infidelity.”<sup>261</sup> Conversely, the CMS saw the school at Providence as a serious threat to their success on the Mackenzie and around Great Slave Lake, because of the importance of implanting their respective denominational orthodoxies in the rising generation of Christians, even if their focus on moral, cultural and social change was effectively the same.<sup>262</sup> As Faraud wrote in 1868, “to have a good school...is to prepare our holy cause for triumph.”<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Taché, *Vingt Années*, 90.

<sup>260</sup> Bompas to CMS, 12 July 1868, CMSA-C/C1/O10/34; Bompas to CMS, 13 November 1871, CMSA-C/C1/O10/37.

<sup>261</sup> Grollier to Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1971.0220-8508. “...ayant grandi sont les victimes de l’infidélité protestante.”

<sup>262</sup> Bompas to CMS, June 1887, *AL* (1887), 28.

<sup>263</sup> Faraud to Cox, 1 April 1868, AD-HPF4191.C75-35. “...avoir une bonne école...c’est faire triompher notre sainte cause.”

This competition also manifested itself architecturally as both denominations strove to provide appropriate facilities. It was more pronounced where both denominations established at the same post and schools became a marker of presence and facilities on offer; the general reticence of parents to leave their children made the drive to attract them extremely important. As the longstanding gateway to the Mackenzie, Fort Chipewyan became one of these locations. A Catholic stronghold, it had been earmarked by Taché as the site for their main residential school.<sup>264</sup> That school, however, was moved to Providence, and it was only when Bompas arrived at Fort Chipewyan to establish a day school in 1867 that the Oblates acted.

Bompas saw a school as integral to gaining the Athabasca region and Fort Chipewyan provided a stable site with a large indigenous and non-indigenous population.<sup>265</sup> Beginning with informal education in the mission house, the school moved to a small, purpose-built structure in late 1874 (fig.5.33).<sup>266</sup> Although Reeve reported in 1880 that a number of children were temporarily living at the mission house, there was no formal residence and it remained a day school only.<sup>267</sup> The building, located next to

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<sup>264</sup> Taché, *Vingt Années*, 111.

<sup>265</sup> Bompas to CMS, 13 November 1871, CMSA-C/C1/O10/37.

<sup>266</sup> A.C. Garrioch, *A Hatchet Mark in Duplicate* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1929), 13; Arthur Shaw to CMS, 2 January 1875, CMSA-C/C1/O58/1.

<sup>267</sup> Reeve to CMS, 5 March 1880, CMSA-C/C1/O54/8.



**5.33:** Fort Chipewyan Anglican Mission. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-168*  
*The day school is to the immediate right of the church.*

the Anglican church, was a one-roomed structure with space and facilities for teaching only.

Both Clut and Faraud saw the Anglican school as a threat and provided informal schooling as early as 1867.<sup>268</sup> The construction of the day school, however, spurred Clut to establish a formal facility, bringing three sisters directly from Providence, bypassing the Sisters' procedural framework because of the need for urgency to combat the

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<sup>268</sup> Clut to [Faraud], 12 December 1867, AD-GLPP-665.



CMS.<sup>269</sup> The initial school was housed in a retrofitted outbuilding until a purpose-built structure was erected in 1881. Unlike its Protestant counterpart, it was a residential facility with a day-stream for local, mainly Métis, families. It was enlarged in 1898 and 1907. It included classrooms and dormitories to provide for housing and teaching the children.<sup>270</sup> The facility was larger and more stylistically distinct than its Anglican counterpart, reflecting its residential component and its place within the wider traditions of Catholic conventual architecture, as well as the relative size and strength of the local missions.

Similarly, at Lesser Slave Lake, both organizations established boarding schools in the 1890s, just a few miles apart, fighting to attract indigenous parents through their facilities.<sup>271</sup> Holmes, who established the Anglican school in 1887 as a day institution with boarding facilities for six students in the mission house, believed that it was “the most effective weapon”<sup>272</sup> against the Oblates.<sup>273</sup> After the opening of a Catholic residential facility in 1890 (fig.5.34), Holmes saw a distinctive threat to his own establishment; a lack of infrastructure, in his mind, was a distinct and discouraging aspect in the school’s development.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan*, 116; Carney, “Holy Angels,” 291; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 149.

<sup>270</sup> McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan*, 115; Carney, “Holy Angels,” 292.

<sup>271</sup> Holmes to CMS, 29 December 1887, *AL* (1887): 282; Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 268.

<sup>272</sup> Holmes to CMS, 31 December 1891, *AL* (1892): 182.

<sup>273</sup> Holmes to CMS, 26 December 1890, *AL* (1890): 433.

<sup>274</sup> Holmes to CMS, 10 March 1889, *AL* (1888): 218. See also: Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 302.



**5.34:** Catholic Residential School, Lesser Slave Lake. *Glenbow Archives, NA-1338-21*

Holmes erected a school to accommodate 30 boarders in 1890, followed by a new building in 1894 and addition in 1900 for the school's increasing enrolment.<sup>275</sup> Its architecture was very much the same as elsewhere (fig.5.35). Even after 1900, the Anglican facility was essentially domestic in its form, contrasting strongly with the institutionalized Catholic presence in the convent-school. Yet their parallel development was different than that at Fort Chipewyan because neither organization had a longstanding presence there. The direct and relatively even competition at Lesser Slave Lake was fairly unique, with schools usually following the regional patterns of missionary occupation.

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<sup>275</sup> Holmes to CMS, 5 January 1894, *AL* (1893): 417; Holmes to CMS, 31 December 1900, *AL* (1900): 872.



5.35: Anglican Residential School, Lesser Slave Lake. *Provincial Archives of Alberta*, A14795

Despite architectural differences, there was a consistent desire throughout the northern missions to create an alternative life away from the “atmosphere of the camp.” Schools were intended to be like a Christian home, expressing Christian and civilized values in opposition to traditional life, both through direct education and spatial orientation. These spaces were ideological as well as practical, embedded with specific meaning as to their civilizing function based on the clear assumption that indigenous society needed to be changed.<sup>276</sup> As a permanent structure with interior spatial division, like the mission house, schools showed how Christians should live in their architectural fabric. For example, their integral focus on cleanliness was often emphasized in contrast to indigenous camps, reinforcing the dichotomy that missionaries created between pre-

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<sup>276</sup> Carr, “Atopoi,” 112.

Christian and Christian life. Similarly, the division of space by gender and the creation of different spheres of labour, leisure and worship reinforced wider Christian values that missionaries hoped would be changed in indigenous society. Schools were a place to teach and demonstrate the Christian life, through separation from traditional indigenous life and its associated values.

The dichotomy that missionaries saw between indigenous and Christian society was similarly emphasized through educational pedagogy. Missionary teaching was methodologically and spatially dissimilar to the traditional ways indigenous people taught their children.<sup>277</sup> While traditional indigenous pedagogy focused on oral and experiential family-and community-centred learning taking place flexibly in the camp and on the land, literacy-based Christian education, with the exception of vocational training, was focussed inside classrooms using structured methodologies, as reflected in educational architecture. Indigenous and Christian education was divided on what was taught, how it was taught and where instruction took place, creating separation between the indigenous and Christian worlds.

Missionaries saw education as addressing the perceived problems in indigenous society, thus once again bringing the issue of civilization to the fore. The understanding that indigenous children were ultimately going to return to their communities did not align

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<sup>277</sup> Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 15-38.

with the dominant understanding of education as a civilizing force, nor the shift in pedagogy away from indigenous teaching which prepared children for traditional life. Indigenous parents explicitly expressed concerns about this. For missionaries, the creation of a new Christian, indigenous society necessarily required cultural change, yet the reality made economic change unrealistic and ineffective. Missionaries wanted to teach vocational children skills, and associated Christian values, for future prosperity, yet it was not clear exactly what those skills might be, within the northern context.<sup>278</sup> Consequently, missionaries had to grapple with their understanding of Christian education in contrast to the context of their work.

On one level, vocational training became disguised in the form of keeping schools running. The problem of provisioning residential schools was, in some places, solved by agriculture. Residential schools tended to be established in areas more conducive to cultivation, such as Lesser Slave Lake.<sup>279</sup> The Catholic lay brothers assisted in the development of extensive farming operations; late-century images of Fort Chipewyan, for example, attest to that. Anglicans also developed agricultural facilities; Hay River was chosen as a location for a school for this reason. Crops were not particularly diverse, with heavy emphasis towards root vegetables, although Clute reported in 1888 that wheat

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<sup>278</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 271.

<sup>279</sup> Faraud to [Fabre], 20 May 1873, AD-GLPP-1643.

could grow at Chipewyan, with lessening success further north.<sup>280</sup> Cows could also be kept, and were at Providence.<sup>281</sup>

Cultivation continued to signify that the country was being tamed and the wilderness and its people brought into the Christian fold; as Grouard wrote: “the potato is, here, the sign of civilization.”<sup>282</sup> Clut also asserted that the land, with significant effort, could be brought under cultivation, although this was easier in certain areas.<sup>283</sup> However, the desire to develop successful agricultural facilities made this a priority of mission development, despite the clear difficulties.<sup>284</sup> Agricultural experimentation occurred primarily at the schools and became integrated into the curriculum as vocational training in principles of industry; although missionaries were aware that the children were unlikely to become farmers, understandings of agriculture as intrinsically civilizing remained and missionaries emphasized the important connections between farming and education (fig. 5.36).<sup>285</sup> There is a clear undercurrent in missionary writing connecting submission of the land through civilization with education, as well as belief that indigenous people might eventually settle in communities with a regulated, but non-

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<sup>280</sup> Clut, *Mackenzie Basin*, 138. See also: Bompas to CMS, 14 July 1888, AL (1888): 5.

<sup>281</sup> Lecorre to [Faraud], 27 June 1878, AD-GLPPC-18.

<sup>282</sup> Grouard to Cox, 23 June 1863, AD-HPF4191.C75-123. “...la patate est, ici, l’enseigne de la civilisation...”

<sup>283</sup> Clut, *Mackenzie Basin*, 138-40.

<sup>284</sup> Boisramé to Faraud, 11 November 1877, AD-GLPPC-1.

<sup>285</sup> Bompas to CMS, 23 February 1889, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1889/169.



**5.36:** Agricultural Work at Fort Resolution Residential School, c.1920s. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-043178*

agricultural, economy.<sup>286</sup> Vocational skills, therefore, introduced children to values of labour and industry for this hypothesized eventuality, as well as other ideas that missionaries also inculcated through different avenues, such as gender roles and the regulation of time around a Christian, agricultural calendar.<sup>287</sup> That some groups of indigenous people were erecting cabins at certain missions for seasonal use by the end of the century also made missionaries more hopeful of this potential development.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Huel, *Proclaiming*, 107-109.

<sup>287</sup> Prochner et al, "Infant Schooling," 99.

<sup>288</sup> Grouard, "Excursions au Mackenzie et Klondyke," *Missions* 39 (1901): 132; Reeve to Fenn, 10 November 1892, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1893/36.



**5.37:** Lumber Work at Fort Resolution Residential School, c.1920s. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-048021*

The full extent of children's participation at either denomination's facilities is not entirely clear. Lay brothers did the bulk of the Oblates' farming and the CMS at Hay River had someone on staff to run the farm.<sup>289</sup> However, the participation of children in vocational programmes and manual labour suggests that farm work was an aspect of this. Grandin, in particular, emphasized the importance of manual labour, particularly agriculture, in childhood education because he believed regulated industry formed the framework of civilized society.<sup>290</sup> Boys also participated in other activities, including lumbering (fig. 5.37). Vocational training for girls aimed to inculcate domestic values

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<sup>289</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 141.

<sup>290</sup> Champagne, *Grandin*, 179.



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**5.38:** Sewing Class at Fort Resolution Residential School, c.1920s. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-043181*

sewing, knitting and housekeeping but the intent was the same (fig.5.38). Participation in vocational training, even when it was understood that children would not participate in these activities as adults, was intended to inculcate industry within the larger framework of value-based education. Like morality, industry, as a Christian value, was intended to be systematically applied to Christian life. Vocational activities also reinforced gender roles. What Vincent characterized as “useful skills” were effectively methods of inculcating industry on children, and teaching them to be productive

members of Christian society.<sup>291</sup> Vocational training was as much a “character-forming process”<sup>292</sup> as it was about the actual skills, taught in the joint hope of an eventual shift in northern settlement patterns, and the more immediate desire to modify the value system of indigenous communities.<sup>293</sup>

By extension, the vocational facilities developed in tandem with the school buildings themselves became an integral aspect of bringing northern people and landscape towards an ideological civilization. Not only orienting students towards Christian values, ethics and culture, they also transformed the landscape through cultivation and control, echoing the consistent focus on environmental transformation. Schools explicitly demonstrated Christians’ ability to transform and reshape the land through space and cultivation, with the growth of farms as explicit offshoots of the facilities intended to shape the future of Christian communities.<sup>294</sup> Probably the best-documented agricultural initiative in the northern missions is that at Hay River, where the Rev. Alfred Vale photographed the vast, productive gardens of the school in contrast to the natural state of the Slave River (figs.5.39;5.40). The contrast between the cultivated and natural worlds is where the northern schools sharply differed from their southern counterparts, which were often surrounded by farmland. In this, missionaries walked a fine and often unclear line between the world they developed at the schools and world students would

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<sup>291</sup> Vincent to CMS, 31 December 1898, *AL* (1898): 545.

<sup>292</sup> Spendlove to CMS, 25 February 190, *AL* (1902): 598.

<sup>293</sup> Grant, *Wintertime*, 184.

<sup>294</sup> Bompas to Fenn, 13 November 1882, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1883/38.



5.39: Gardens at Hay River. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-73*



5.40: Ploughing at Hay River. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-86*

re-enter when they graduated, as many of the skills taught at the schools were not applicable on the land. While most missionaries recognized that indigenous Christians could live faithful, virtuous lives in the wilderness, connections between Christianity and landscape did not disappear.<sup>295</sup> The wilderness-civilization dichotomy remained in the cultivated grounds and educational programmes of mission schools, creating an uneasy relationship between what and how children were taught, the Christian, yet indigenous, life it was assumed they were going to lead, and the spaces in which they occurred.

### *Conclusion*

The growth of institutional structures at northern missions was a gradual process. Despite their important role in the inculcation of Christianity and civilization, the northern conditions made their development and erection slow. By 1900, only select missions had a school and church, despite the major push beginning in the 1870s to furnish missions with these important structures. However, the ones that had been constructed were important additions to the overall missionary programme, structures in which the ideas introduced in early evangelization were developed and consolidated within a growth body of indigenous Christians.

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<sup>295</sup> Scott to Fenn, 15 February 1891, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1891/O/172; Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 249.

Missions specifically aimed to change indigenous life and both churches and schools had a clear and specific role to play in developing Christian belief and enacting change on individuals and indigenous society at large. These two institutions worked in tandem to develop complementary aspects of missionary programming: while the church focused primarily on spiritual development, schools were viewed as specifically addressing issues of civilization, despite their recognition of the unsuitability of the agricultural ideal. However, there was also clear crossover, as changes encouraged from the pulpit touched fundamental aspects of indigenous economy, such as seasonal migration patterns, while issues of doctrine and worship were firmly within the mandate of schools. These institutions, like the houses, were places of mediation and contact where Christian ideas were developed and solidified within indigenous communities, moving beyond initial dialogue in an attempt to enact wider societal and religious changes on indigenous society.

## 6: Visual Culture and Missionary Catholicism

As missionaries consolidated their operations through the north, it became clear that both organizations were operating on effectively the same model, despite theological differences and denominational rivalry. Both were committed to the conversion of indigenous people and the development of a new civilized, Christian society.

Nevertheless, there were clear differences. These were certainly obvious in some aspects of their operational models, such as the Oblates' partnership with the Grey Nuns. There were, however, marked differences in their place in the power structures of the territory and theological approaches which shaped their strategies both intrinsically and as related to one another, in what was markedly an un-ecumenical era between Catholics and Protestants.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Aubert, *The Church in a Secularised Society* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 13.

For the Oblates, as a French Catholic organization in British territories, the differentiation between themselves and other non-indigenous people in the north was most emphatically felt, rooted in language, nationality and theology. In a context that was not always accepting of them as Catholics, the Oblates were forced to develop mission strategies that expressed their denominational identity and presence as one separate from both the non-Christian world and their European counterparts, including the CMS. One of the primary places where they developed a uniquely Catholic strategy was through the design and decoration of interior worship space, as a mediator between the temporal and spiritual realms and the Christian and indigenous worlds that reflected their ultramontane understanding of mission. Their interior church spaces functioned much as Anglican churches throughout the north, as a place to introduce Christian orthodoxy and community worship, but they also served to set aside a unique place for Catholic worship and identity in a place that, as British territory, was fundamentally Protestant. These were spaces of transformation where indigenous people came in direct contact with defined aspects of the Catholic church as an institution. It was also where missionaries sought to change indigenous people's spiritual and temporal lives through the creation of a visual culture of Catholicism as the Oblates sought to transplant a European Catholic Church into indigenous space.

*French Catholics in British Territory*

The Oblates' mission was driven by their commitment to ultramontane Catholicism, recognizing a single, universal Catholic Church whose authority derived solely from the pope and transmitted through its institutional hierarchy. Not only did it shape their theology, but also their ecclesiology and the role they saw themselves playing throughout the global mission field. Central to this approach was the universalism of the Roman Church and the complete jurisdiction of the pope over spiritual affairs outside the control of secular states.<sup>2</sup> This view of Catholicism flourished in France in the early nineteenth century and Mazenod formed his missionary organization around this ideology, with Rome as spiritual guide.<sup>3</sup> Ultramontanism, particularly as an approach to church-state relations, was also extremely strong in Québec under such figures as Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montréal and Louis-François Laflèche, both of whom were intimately connected with the Oblates in Canada; prior to 1856, Laflèche had worked with Taché at Île-à-la-Crosse.<sup>4</sup> That the majority of Catholic missions were funded and managed by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome further consolidated the connection between papal authority and mission through the creation of centralized

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<sup>2</sup> Sheridan Gilley, "The Papacy," in *World Christianities c.1815-1914*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.

<sup>3</sup> James F. McMillan, "Catholic Christianity in France from the Restoration to the Separation of Church and State, 1815-1905," in *World Christianities*, 221; Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 36; Etherington, "Missionary Experiences," 285.

<sup>4</sup> Phillipe Sylvain, "Quelques aspects de l'ultramontanisme canadien-français," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 25, no. 2 (1971): 240; Nadia F. Eid, *Le clergé et le pouvoir politique au Québec: une analyse de l'idéologie ultramontaine au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise, 1978), 16; 30.



power structures for evangelism.<sup>5</sup> This framework in which the Oblates operated was centralized, universal and outside the power structures of secular states as a non-national enterprise, based instead in the institutional Roman Catholic Church and instilled with a militant urgency to secure the world for the Church.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, the CMS was a representative of a national church, despite their periodic conflicts with the HBC and other imperial agents across the British Empire.<sup>7</sup> Although it was Oblate policy to cooperate with imperial agents, they believed fully that British imperial interests were no bar to the expansion of universal Catholicism because authority flowed from the pope, not the state.<sup>8</sup> This understanding that the religion they were disseminating was Roman, not French or British, completely informed mission development.

Nationality, however, was a central force in shaping the Oblates' experience in North America. By the nineteenth century, the majority of Catholic missionaries abroad were French and many operated in Protestant, namely British, territories.<sup>9</sup> Although this was

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<sup>5</sup> Carey, *God's Empire*, 126; Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Mission* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), 336.

<sup>6</sup> Terence Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism and Canadianism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 91.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, *Religion*, 116.

<sup>8</sup> McCarthy, "Theory," 40; Huel, "Mutuality," 441.

<sup>9</sup> White and Daughton, "Placing French Missionaries in the Modern World," in *In God's Empire*, 4; Barr, "Imperium," 611; Neill, *Christian Missions*, 212; Joy Brain, "Moving from the Margins to the Mainstream: The Roman Catholic Church," in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History*, ed.

no bar to the expansion of a Catholic spiritual empire, French missionaries were often viewed as hostile representatives of a foreign power, particularly within the British Empire.<sup>10</sup> This was precisely the situation faced by the Oblates in northern Canada as they, with a few notable Canadian and Irish exceptions, were all from France, leading to a deep suspicion of their motives on the part of the CMS and HBC.<sup>11</sup>

On one hand, resentment and distrust was driven by denominational competition. The refusal on the part of both missionary organizations to split the field, as suggested by Colvile, fuelled continued conflict and ill-will. This stemmed from the heavy anti-ecumenical spirit of the period but also, on the part of the HBC and CMS, the deeply embedded anti-Catholicism present in nineteenth-century British society.<sup>12</sup> Seen by many as intrinsically opposed to British, Protestant beliefs and morals, ultramontane Catholicism was viewed as dangerous, because Catholics viewed the spiritual empire as superseding the temporal one, which, for the CMS and HBC, was a direct threat to their power and rights in exploration, commercial activity and evangelism.<sup>13</sup> Both Kirkby and Hunter made their view clear when they discussed with the officers of the Mackenzie

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Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 1997), 196; Boudens, *Catholic Missionaries*, 58.

<sup>10</sup> Gunson, *Messengers*, 175; Allan K. Davidson, *Aotearoa New Zealand: Defining Moments in the Gospel-Culture Encounter* (Geneva : WCC Publications, 1996),8.

<sup>11</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 53.

<sup>12</sup> Choquette, *Oblate Assault*, 165; Wolffe, "Anti-Catholicism," 44.

<sup>13</sup> Edward R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968),38.

District the possibility of barring the Oblates from the region.<sup>14</sup> For the CMS, Catholicism was as bad, if not worse, than the lack of religion they saw in indigenous people, and the CMS viewed themselves as in “a clash between the Gospel v. [*sic*] Heathenism and Romanism”<sup>15</sup>, both dangerous and formidable foes.

For the HBC, the central issue with ultramontane Catholicism was that of authority. From a wider perspective, suspicion of Catholics’ relationship with secular authority grew after the reestablishment of the Catholic hierarchy in England by Pius IX in 1850, viewed as an act of papal aggression inside the territorial boundaries of a non-Catholic state with ramifications felt throughout the British Empire.<sup>16</sup> The issue over authority was further complicated by the ultramontane belief in spiritual jurisdictions superseding political ones. The creation of Apostolic Vicariates, divorced from temporal authority and designed to supersede imperial politics, further compounded these issues.<sup>17</sup> On the ground, these beliefs led to incidents such as Farad’s questioning of James Anderson’s authority to bar a Catholic establishment at Fort Resolution, on the grounds of the divine sanction of the evangelical project, which Anderson saw as serious cause for concern.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the questioning of the HBC’s role in spiritual matters, namely their place as civil administrators of marriage, also put them at odds with the Oblates as the

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<sup>14</sup> Hunter to Venn, 23 August 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/58; Kirkby Journal, 3 November 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/64.

<sup>15</sup> Spendlove to CMS, 30 June 1886, AL (1886): 5.

<sup>16</sup> Roger Aubert, *Le Pontificat de Pie IX (1846-1887)* (Paris: Bloud and Guy, 195), 71; Norman, *Anti-Catholicism*, 52.

<sup>17</sup> Neill, *Christian Mission*, 154.

<sup>18</sup> Taché to Simpson, 21 December 1853, HBCA-D.5/38.

Company believed a struggle for control could subvert the established structure of fur trade society.<sup>19</sup> This did not mean that the Oblates were without allies; their attempts to work within the confines of HBC rules were generally viewed positively and concern over the Oblates' intentions did mellow over time.<sup>20</sup> The Oblates also had direct supporters, including Colvile, who saw Catholics as generally inoffensive and law-abiding.<sup>21</sup> But the Oblates' main source of support came from the Company's French-speaking Catholic Métis employees who demanded that their spiritual welfare be attended to and consistently supported the Oblates' expansion.<sup>22</sup>

Concerns on the part of the CMS and HBC were also distinctly national, with direct hostility to the idea, in Hunter's words, of "alien French priests" interloping into "the territories of Great Britain."<sup>23</sup> Hunter similarly wrote to Bernard Ross at Fort Simpson that "there are not only religious but national differences."<sup>24</sup> Within the HBC, Simpson, in particular, was very keen to "check the Roman Catholic expansion"<sup>25</sup> because of his suspicions that the arrival of the priests signalled the beginning of a subversive French takeover of the territory. He was not alone in this suspicion: Anderson expressed this view to Taché as a reason to disallow Catholic expansion in the Mackenzie.<sup>26</sup> Donald

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<sup>19</sup> Bernard Ross to Robert Campbell, 28 November HBCA-B.200/b/33.

<sup>20</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 54-55.

<sup>21</sup> Colvile to Simpson, 14 July 1851, in *Inward Correspondence*, 225.

<sup>22</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Hunter to Venn, 23 August 1850, CMSA-C/C1/O35/58.

<sup>24</sup> Hunter to Bernard Ross, 21 August 1858, CMSA-C/C1/O35/58.

<sup>25</sup> Simpson to Committee, 20 June 1841, in *London Correspondence*, 25.

<sup>26</sup> Taché to Simpson, 21 December 1853, HBCA-D.5/38.

Ross at Norway House summarized the HBC understanding of the Oblates more emphatically when he wrote: “however good or worthy many of them individually certainly are, they are most rigidly ruled and guided by a power foreign in nature”<sup>27</sup> which threatened British territorial rights.

The Oblates were well aware of these antagonisms based on both their faith and nationality and worked hard to downplay the latter.<sup>28</sup> The dispatch of Canadian Oblate Zéphirin Gascon to Fort Resolution in 1859 was specifically intended to downplay narratives of Catholicism as nationally bounded to France and a threat to the security of the Mackenzie.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Taché’s Québec origins were seen as a distinct advantage, particularly after he became a Bishop where, as a British citizen, he would liaise with the HBC as a compatriot and not, as Grollier noted, “by the name of foreigner.”<sup>30</sup> Through appointments such as these and continual efforts to build bridges with the HBC, the Oblates attempted to secure a place for themselves where they were not viewed as a foreign threat.

Rather, the Oblates desired to secure their place as representatives of the Catholic spiritual empire alone and they actively worked to build a church based on Roman

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<sup>27</sup> Donald Ross to Simpson, 10 April 1841, HBCA-D.5/6.

<sup>28</sup> Clut to Fabre, 7 March 1871, AD-GLPP-689.

<sup>29</sup> Grollier to Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1971.0220-202.

<sup>30</sup> Grollier to Taché, 20 July 1860, PAA-PR1971.0220-202. “...par le nom d’étranger.” See also: Choquette, *Oblate Assault*, 205.

hierarchy, despite the suspicions over issues of power and belief.<sup>31</sup> For the Oblates, their spiritual and authoritative metropole was unequivocally Rome. The centralized and institutional nature of the Roman Church was integral to their outlook towards the introduction of Catholic Christianity and civilization because of the prevailing ultramontane belief that European civilization was derived from the influence of the Church.<sup>32</sup> They believed that the introduction of universal, institutional Catholicism could build an ideal Christian society, adhering to the moral and social norms of the pastoral model; Québec was often upheld as the epitome of this, and of what precisely what ultramontane missions hoped to achieve.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, mission necessarily involved the complete extension of the Catholic Church, in its structure, hierarchy, rituals and symbols, transplanting them directly from the centre of the Catholic world to one of its furthest peripheries. Local Dene culture, the community amongst whom the Oblates were primarily successful, made little difference because they believed that Catholicism and its associated cultural aspects were universal and needed to be accurately replicated, no matter the pre-existing cultural norms and needs of indigenous communities.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Taché, *Vingt Années*, 166.

<sup>32</sup> Jacques Gadille, "Le concept de civilisation chrétienne dans le pensée romantique," in *Civilisation chrétienne : Approche historique d'une idéologie, XVIIIe-XXe siècle*, ed. Jean-René Derré, Xavier Montclos and Bernard Plongeron (Paris: Beauchesne, 1975), 183-209.

<sup>33</sup> Grant, "Enclaves," 272.

<sup>34</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 6.

Integral to this was the replication of liturgy, ritual and symbolism. This was not unique to ultramontane mission because of the importance of liturgy of the Mass in Catholicism. However, for ultramontanes, the emphasis on Rome and its standards encouraged the growth of Italian-style piety, including personal devotional practices, which was more dramatic and emotional than the austere forms prevalent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France.<sup>35</sup> Greater emphasis on external practice encouraged the growth of a visual culture that extended from ritual and decoration, linking the material culture of global Catholicism to its Roman centre.

The spatial formation of Oblate missions was fundamentally shaped by this visual culture and the belief in a universal church whose practice and presentation could be applied globally.<sup>36</sup> As the spiritual heart of the mission, the church best exemplified this idea through its internal space intended to transform its congregants and create clear links between the mission field and the global Church.<sup>37</sup> The Oblates' development of interior worship spaces, especially when compared with the sober, Bible-based practice of the CMS, was a specific and important aspect of the strategy to integrate indigenous Christians into the universal church while simultaneously civilizing them through the power of sacramental Catholicism.<sup>38</sup> In particular, Catholic missionaries looked to create

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<sup>35</sup> Aubert, *Pie IX*, 457; Gibson, *French Catholicism*, 265; Mary Heimann, "Catholic Revivalism in Worship and Devotion," in *World Christianities, c.1815-1914*, 71.

<sup>36</sup> Dichtl, *Frontiers of Faith*, 91.

<sup>37</sup> Clut to Faraut, 16 December 1861, AD-GLPP-633.

<sup>38</sup> Peake, "Personnel and Policy," 68-69; Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 42.



**6.1:** Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Good Hope, c.1921. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-100405*

a non-national Catholic Church in Protestant territory, differentiated from their rivals by a distinct material culture which also functioned as a tool for the inculcation of ideology.<sup>39</sup> This desire was most obvious in architecture where churches and chapels physically transplanted Catholic material culture into the north and presented visually the Oblates' version of universal Catholicism to indigenous people.

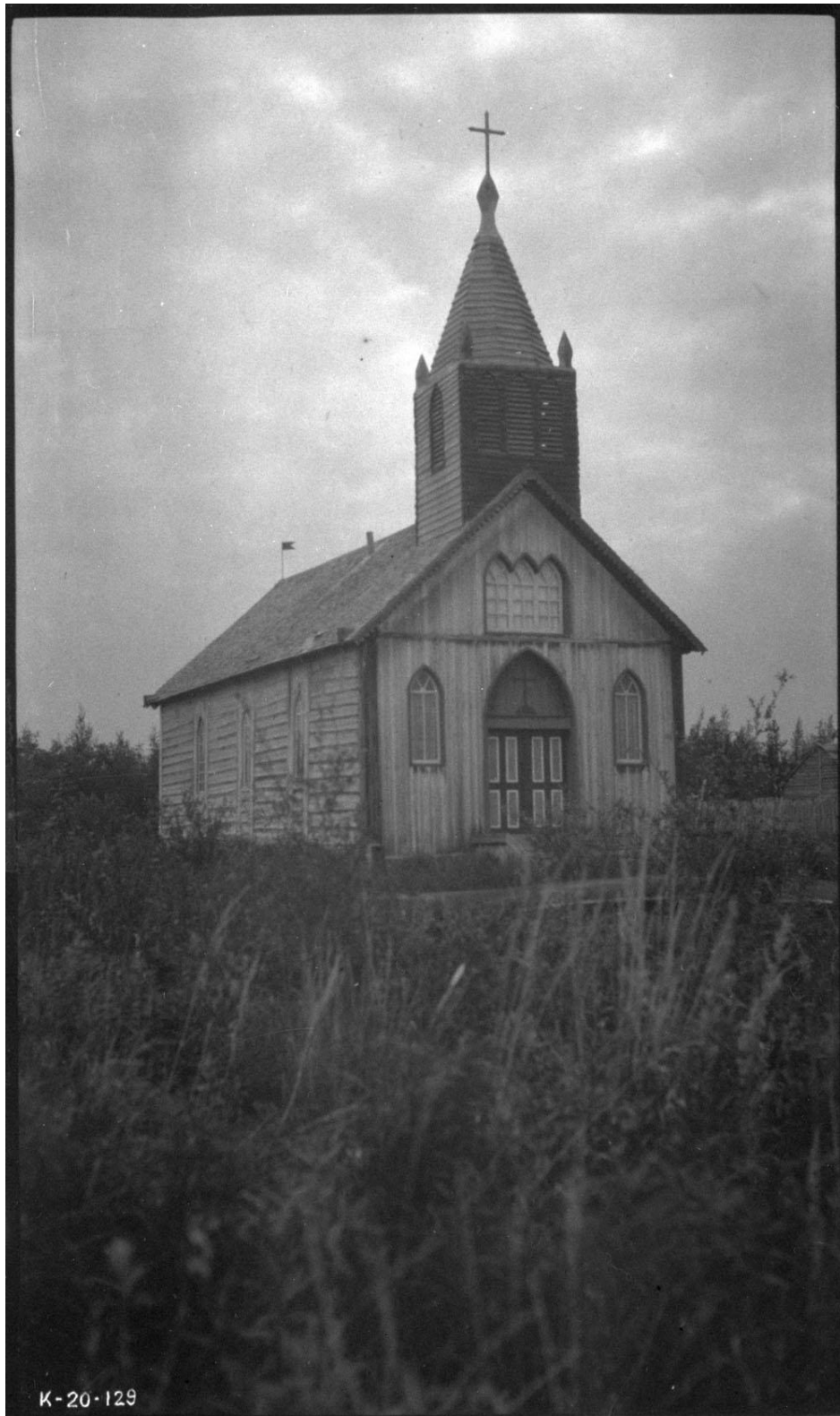
### *In the Church*

One of the most well-known Catholic structures in the Mackenzie missions is the Church of Our Lady of Good Hope at Fort Good Hope (fig.6.1), constructed primarily by Séguin

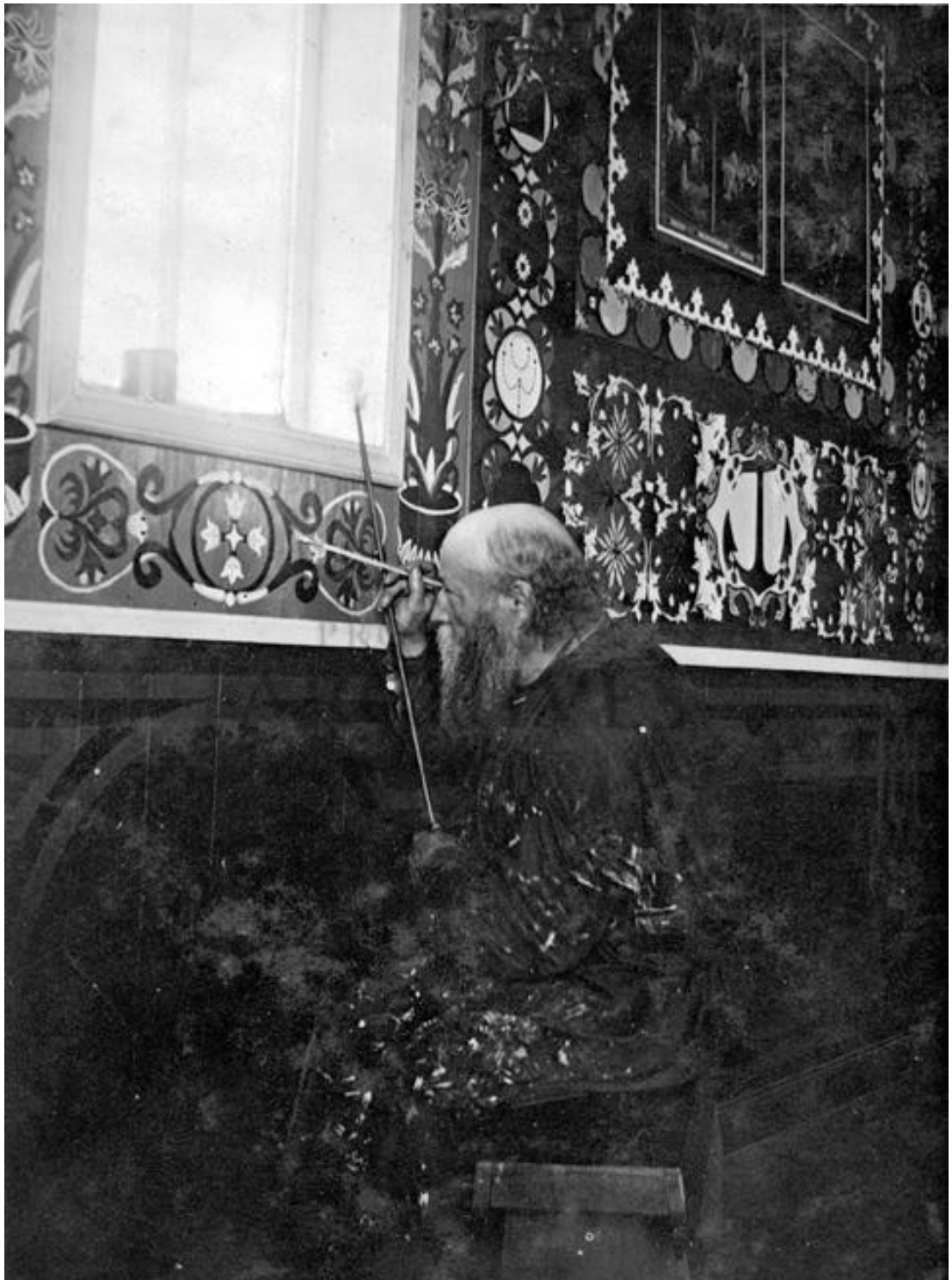
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<sup>39</sup> Dichtl, *Frontiers*, 88.





6.2: Ste. Thérèse, Fort Norman, exterior. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-101603*



**6.3:** Ducot decorating the interior of Ste Thérèse, Fort Norman. *Provincial Archives of Alberta, A3670*



6.4: St. Raphael, Fort Liard, interior, c.1894. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-217*

and Kearney after a design by Petitot who described it as “the most beautiful church in the North, corresponding with the most religious people.”<sup>40</sup> Its decorative scheme was also developed by Father Xavier-Georges Ducot, who also constructed and painted the chapel of Ste.-Thérèse, Fort Norman (fig.6.2 and 6.3), and Brother Julien Ancel, who was sent to the Mackenzie mission specifically to build and decorate churches, including at Fort Liard, completed in 1882 (fig.6.4; see also figure 4.10).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Petitot, *Quinze Ans*, 116. “...la plus belle église du Nord, à laquelle correspondit le peuple le plus religieux...”

<sup>41</sup> Wright, *Good Hope*, 20-21; Ancel to Faraud, 28 August 1882, AD-GLPPC-1.



6.5: Our Lady of Good Hope, interior. *Author's photo*

Petitot began to design the church shortly after his arrival in 1864; construction began in 1866, with the basic structure completed in 1876 and enlarged beginning in 1879 to accommodate an increasing congregation.<sup>42</sup> The exterior appears much like other Catholic churches throughout the north and in Québec. The exterior, however, belies the sumptuousness of the interior (fig.6.5), decorated by Petitot, Ancel and Ducot, with carving by Séguin. The focus of the church is the large, Gothic altar (fig.6.6) designed and built by Petitot, separated from the nave by a rail and chancel arch showing the crucified Christ (fig.6.7),

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<sup>42</sup> Petitot, *Quinze Ans*, 113; Kearney to Faraud, 24 June 1879, AD-GLPPC-17.





6.6: Altar, Our Lady of Good Hope. *Author's photo*



6.7: Chancel Arch Crucifixion, Our Lady of Good Hope. *Author's photo*

and surmounted by a French-made Madonna and Child (fig.6.8).<sup>43</sup> The walls of the church are filled with panel paintings showing biblical scenes (fig.6.9) with richly decorated borders (fig.6.10); the two paintings in the nave were completed by Ancel, but the others were not added until the twentieth century despite appearing in Petitot's original plans.<sup>44</sup>

The design scheme is heavily based on European precedent; Petitot described the church as being "modelled on Chartres"<sup>45</sup> and the border paintings as "in the Italian

<sup>43</sup> Séguin to his sister, 18 May 1885, PAA-PR1971.0220-186.

<sup>44</sup> Wright, *Good Hope*, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Petitot, *Quinze Ans*, 113. "...copié de celui de Chartres."





6.8: Madonna and Child, Our Lady of Good Hope. *Author's photo*



6.9: Fr. Jean Colas, *The Annunciation, Our Lady of Good Hope*, 1941. Author's photo  
 This painting, and the others in the nave, were in Petitot's original plan but were not executed until the twentieth century.





6.10: Émile Petitot, Decorative Border, Our Lady of Good Hope. *Author's photo*



6.11: Émile Petitot, Vegetal Motif, Our Lady of Good Hope. *Author's photo*



6.12: Émile Grouard, Architectural Motif, St. Charles, Dunvegan. *Author's photo*

style.”<sup>46</sup> That the church was built and decorated in a consciously foreign style and inserted into the northern environment is consistent with both mission practice and the Oblates’ desire to replicate the visual culture of Roman Catholicism. Decoration based on European models, often depicting the saints and various vegetal and architectural motifs (fig.6.11 and 6.12), was the norm across the Oblates’ northern mission. Our Lady of Good Hope is the most elaborate example but nevertheless is representative of the Oblates’ approach to church decoration.<sup>47</sup>

The other well-documented examples of the interior decoration of Oblate churches are the set of paintings by Émile Grouard, executed at Lac La Biche, Dunvegan and Fort Chipewyan between 1878 and 1910.<sup>48</sup> Grouard had done some interior painting during his early years in the Mackenzie, but travelled to France in 1874 to recover from illness, where he also studied painting at the Christian Brothers’ school in Passy; while there, he also met with Petitot.<sup>49</sup> On his return, he designed the interior scheme for a lateral chapel in St.-Albert, before proceeding to Lac La Biche to undertake his first major

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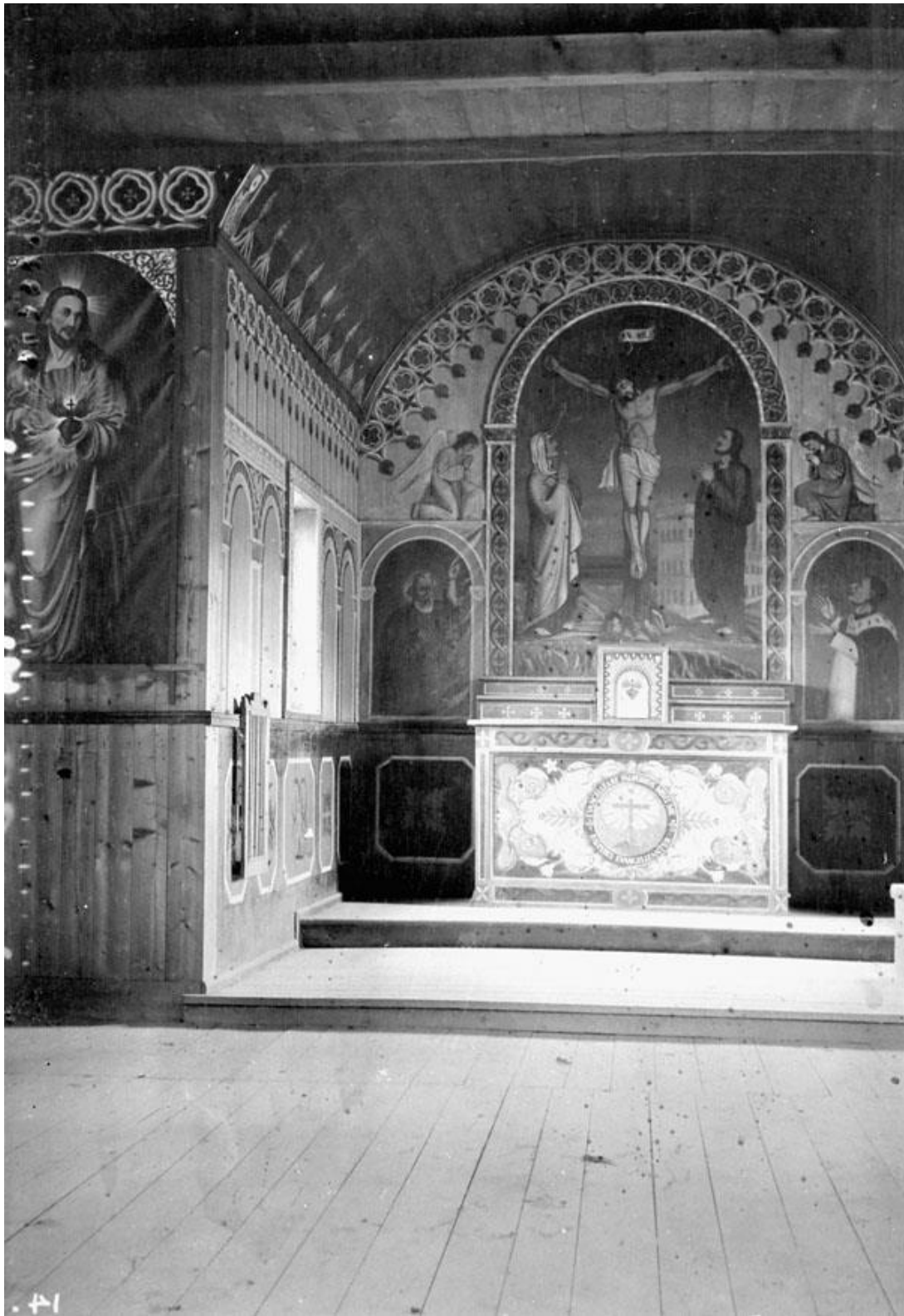
<sup>46</sup> Petitot, *Quinze Ans*, 115. “...dans le gout italien..”

<sup>47</sup> Wright, *Good Hope*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> Larmour, “Grouard,” 106-107.

<sup>49</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 156.





6.13: Émile Grouard, St. Charles, Dunvegan, interior. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-040748*



6.14: Émile Grouard, La Nativité, Fort Chipewyan, interior. *Library and Archives Canada*, PA-040740



**6.15:** St. Pierre, Reindeer Lake (Lac Caribou), Interior. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-13-236*

project in the newly-erected church. He wrote that there he painted:

...on the vault an azure sky studded with gold stars all around diverse ornaments and I had the audacity to undertake on canvas, above the altar, a large painting: Our Lord on the Cross with the Holy Virgin and St. John on either side...Mgr. Faraud showed his satisfaction and manifested his desire to see this painting reproduced in all our churches.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 191. "...à la voûte un ciel d'azur parsemée d'étoiles dorées, tout à l'entour diverses ornements et j'eus l'audace d'entreprendre, sur toile, au-dessus du maître autel, un grand tableau: Notre-Seigneur en croix avec la Sainte Vierge et saint Jean de chaque côté....Mgr Faraud s'en montra satisfait et manifesta le désir de voir ce tableau reproduit dans toutes nos églises."



**6.16:** Convent Interior Chapel, possibly at Providence Mission. *Hudson's Bay Company Archives, 1987-50-N017*

Grouard was familiar with European models and, as per Faraud's instructions, he repeated this decorative scheme at Dunvegan (1885-86; fig.6.13) and Fort Chipewyan (1910; fig.6.14); the altar paintings are virtually the same as is the use of vegetal and architectural motifs and the starry vault.<sup>51</sup> Other examples of interior painting of this kind can be found in photographs, such as the church at Reindeer Lake (fig.6.15), showing the consistent use of European models in church interior design, corresponding to missionary architectural practice as a whole.

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<sup>51</sup> Lamour, "Grouard," 107.

Decorative schemes were central to the creation of Catholic worship space and house-chapels and convent chapels (fig.6.16) were also painted in this way. Although no examples survive, records indicate the presence of painted house-chapels at both Fort Resolution and Providence, as well as a painted interior chapel in the Providence convent, completed by Petitot in 1879.<sup>52</sup> The house-chapel and the *salle* at Fort Good Hope were also “painted in an artistic manner”<sup>53</sup> by Petitot in 1870 and described by him in what is the best description of a house-chapel decorative scheme available. He wrote:

The decoration of the chapel is byzantine; a pink background bordered by flowers on top and bottom, as well as in the corners, the base panels are faux mahogany; the bottom step of the altar imitates a very well-executed mosaic of five types of marble...We have six large paintings of respectable dimensions.<sup>54</sup>

Although much smaller than the church, the chapel adhered to similar design and decorative principles that transcended size to encompass all Catholic worship space, consistent with ideas surrounding universality within the Church. The paintings at Fort Good Hope were done with the expectation that these buildings were unlikely to be replaced in the near future, and were long-term investments in the region.<sup>55</sup> But impermanence did not negate the need for decoration, for, as Petitot noted at Fort

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<sup>52</sup> Grandin Journal, 28 November 1861, *Missions* 6 (1867): 548; Gascon to Fabre, 28 November 1864, *Missions* 6 (1867):551; Petitot to Faraud, 14 January 1879, AD-GLPPC-26.

<sup>53</sup> Clut to Faraud, 30 December 1871, AD-GLPP-696. “...peinte d’une manière artistique.”

<sup>54</sup> Petitot to his parents, 28 February 1870, *Missions* 9 (1870): 367. “La décoration de la chapelle est byzantine: fond rose parsemé de fleurons blancs et de croix d’or, bordure de fleurs en haut et en bas, ainsi que dans les angles; les lambris de soubassement sont en faux bous d’acajou; le marche-pied de l’autel imite une mosaïque très-bien réussie de cinq sorties de marbres....Nous possédons six grands tableaux religieux de dimensions respectables.”

<sup>55</sup> Petitot to Faraud, 12 October 1868, AD-GLPPC-25.





**6.17:** St. Luke's Anglican Church, Fort Vermilion, Interior. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7559-116*

Resolution, it was “necessary to decorate the poor small room of mud to make it worthy of the presence of God.”<sup>56</sup> Decorative schemes were extremely important to the growth of Catholic mission spaces and thus universally applied.

Naturally, as Low Church Anglicans, CMS missionaries found this strategy horrifying, they themselves eschewing intensive decoration in their churches. Most were whitewashed or left with plain wood (fig.6.17); St. Thomas' Moose Factory is a notable exception (fig.6.18). Most CMS missionaries viewed Catholic decorative practice as fundamentally idolatrous and part of the “Papist scheme of striving to win the savage mind by outward

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<sup>56</sup> Petitot to Fabre, 31 August 1862, *Missions* 2 (1863): 234. “...il fallut songner à orner cette pauvre petite chambre de boue pour le render digne de la presence de notre grand Dieu.”

displays of finery and



**6.18:** Chancel Decoration, St. Thomas's Anglican Church, Moose Factory. *Author's photo*

pageant."<sup>57</sup> Kirkby articulated this belief after encountering Faraud at Fort Chipewyan in 1859:

Mr. Faraud asked me to step into the workshop to see a pair of doors he had made for the church, they were exceedingly well-made but painted in the most foolish and fantastic manner and on asking why he had thus spoiled their appearance, he replied 'O, to attract the Indians, they will think more of them from their gaudy colours.' How principally characteristic was this of their whole system to dazzle and allure.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Bompas to CMS, 6 November 1865, CMSA-C/C1/O10/4.

<sup>58</sup> Kirkby Journal, 7 August 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O39/64.

Kirkby' impression reflects the general anti-Catholic bias that viewed the Oblates' missions as superficial and fake.<sup>59</sup> CMS missionaries recognized, however, that images were useful didactic tools and themselves made use of illustrated bibles and magic lanterns, despite concerns over the acceptability of images in the Protestant tradition.<sup>60</sup> Image-use as an integral aspect of architectural design, however, was a distinctly Catholic practice, setting their belief system and ecclesiology apart from their Protestant counterparts. This was consciously done, creating a distinctive Catholic identity and approach manifested through interior architectural spaces.

At its most basic, the use of imagery within architectural space served a didactic purpose, teaching doctrine, history and morality consistent with Catholic belief in images as a way to reach the uneducated, those not viewed as "adult" Christians, including the Dene, through the portrayal of Christian ideology in pictures.<sup>61</sup> With imagery, the Oblates believed they could instruct the Dene through the material fabric of the mission, in conjunction with oral communication, literacy and demonstration; images taught about Christianity, and how to be a Christian through moral and theological lessons, while simultaneously emphasizing the material nature of

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<sup>59</sup> Bompas, Report, January-June 1868, CMSA-C/C1/O10/32.

<sup>60</sup> Kirkby Journal, 19 June 1861, CMSA-C/C1/O39/66; Spendlove to CMS, 25 February 1902, AL (1902): 598. On magic lanterns, see: David Simpson, "Mission and the Magic Lantern," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21, no. 1 (1997): 13-15.

<sup>61</sup> McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 8; David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 162.

sacramental worship.<sup>62</sup> Father Valentin Vegreville noted that “pictures are the best books for the savages”<sup>63</sup> which could be used quickly and effectively to instil orthodox belief during the limited windows of contact the Oblates had with the Dene.<sup>64</sup> Images were also a boon for missionaries just learning or struggling with indigenous languages because of pictures’ ability to fill gaps in linguistic proficiency.<sup>65</sup>

However, images were also seen to function on an emotional level which could overcome cultural barriers. The Oblates believed strongly that church interiors could touch the Dene spiritually and emotionally with the imagery’s inherent message and cause them to grow in grace, because of God’s real presence in the church, through the Eucharist, and the ability to channel grace through sacramentals, including images and statuary.<sup>66</sup> Missionaries often reported on apparent incidents of indigenous emotional and spiritual response to imagery. Grouard, for example, noted of his crucifixion scene at Lac La Biche: “This painting greatly impressed the Indians, who did not grow tired of seeing it and many shed tears of tenderness in front of this images, recalling so much

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<sup>62</sup> Dichtl, *Frontiers*, 101; Gérard Morisset, “Les missions indiennes et la peinture,” *Revue de l’Université d’Ottawa* 4 (1934): 308; Hugonnard to Fabre, 14 June 1878, *Missions* 16 (1878): 336.

<sup>63</sup> Vegreville to Cox, 3 June 1863, AD-HPF4191.C75R-226. “...les images sont les meilleurs livres pour les sauvages.”

<sup>64</sup> Clut to Fabre, 8 August 1876, *Missions* 16 (1878): 39.

<sup>65</sup> Pasquier, *Fathers*, 68; Vegreville to Cox, 13 April 1866, AD-HPF4191.C75R-229.

<sup>66</sup> June-Ann Greeley, “‘Who Would Believe What We Have Heard?’: Christian Spirituality and Imagery from the Passion in Religious Art of New Spain,” *Religion and the Arts* 13, no. 2 (2009): 189; Grouard to Cox, n.d. AD-HPF4191.C75R-132.

love.”<sup>67</sup> The emotive response images could illicit and the relationship with the sacred they were seen to help develop were viewed as direct results of God’s grace acting through them, making pictures more important than simple didactic tools.<sup>68</sup>

With these functions in mind, the Oblates believed that imagery’s role in the north was more important than elsewhere because “here, more than in civilized nations, man needs something that speaks to his heart, his imagination, though the eyes.”<sup>69</sup> Building on the pervasive and racist understanding that indigenous people were less advanced than their European counterparts, they believed that non-Europeans needed demonstrated grandeur to fully understand the power of God.<sup>70</sup> To do this, the Oblates desired to create definitive contrast between the non-Christian wilderness and Christian worship space to demonstrate the spiritual divide between the two worlds. With this contrast, indigenous people were to be drawn into the majesty of God through divine presence and the impressive nature of interior space. Petitot noted: “the savages...are unaccustomed to similar splendours”<sup>71</sup> and could, therefore, be easily impressed by Catholicism’s ability to transform space through material opulence. Statuary was seen as particularly helpful in this regard because of its tangibility, but all imagery and material

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<sup>67</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 191. “Cette peinture impressionna beaucoup nos Indiens qui ne se lassaient pas de la regarder et meme plusieurs versaient des larmes d’attendrissement devant cette image, rappelant tant d’amour.”

<sup>68</sup> Pasquier, *Fathers*, 65-66.

<sup>69</sup> Petitot to his parents, 28 February 1870, *Missions* 9 (1870): 367. “Ici plus que chez les nations civilises l’homme a besoin de quelque chose qui parle à son cœur, à son imagination, par les yeux.”

<sup>70</sup> Taché, “Vingt Années,” 182.

<sup>71</sup> Petitot Journal, 30 June 1867, *Missions* 8 (1869): 292. “...les sauvages...peu accoutumés à de pareilles splendeurs.”

culture contributed to the creation of this contrast between wilderness and Christianity and the demonstration of the glory of God.<sup>72</sup>

However, this contrast also developed a distinctly spiritual role for imagery with ideas of personal suffering, salvation and redemption from the land.<sup>73</sup> The interior decoration of churches vividly demonstrated the contrast between the hardships of indigenous life outside the church and the promise of heavenly glory and redemption. Redemption for the suffering faithful was a well-ingrained theme in nineteenth-century Catholicism and the inability to alleviate hardship through earthly means—agriculture—in the Mackenzie made this illustration all the more fitting, showing that only through the Church could any sort of salvation from suffering be achieved.<sup>74</sup>

This idea was illustrated through the visual contrast between church interiors and the outside world, and in the specific subject matter of didactic imagery which often actively focussed on redemptive themes. The best example of this is Ancel's *Our Lady of Good Hope* (fig. 6.19), in the chancel of Our Lady of Good Hope.<sup>75</sup> Depicting the Virgin with the Trinity descending to Adam and Eve, it subverts the traditional depiction of the

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<sup>72</sup> Séguin to his sister, 18 May 1885, PAA-PR1971.0220-186.

<sup>73</sup> Albert Lacombe to Fabre, 12 May 1870, *Missions* 9 (1870): 256.

<sup>74</sup> Richard D.E. Burton, *Holy Tears, Holy Blood: Women, Catholicism and the Culture of Suffering in France, 1840-1870* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2004), xiv-xiii; Pasquier, *Fathers*, 61.

<sup>75</sup> Wright, *Good Hope*, 21-22.



6.19: Julien Ancel, *Our Lady of Good Hope*, early 1880s. Author's photo

expulsion from the garden by offering hope through the intercession of the Virgin, blending Old and New Testament material. The image focuses on redemption and reflects the focus of the mission: the offering of salvation to indigenous people through Catholicism and a definitive contrast between the Christian and non-Christian worlds.

The mission station also contrasted sharply with the wilderness through its ceremonial aspects which were needed to inject order and godliness into a disordered landscape.<sup>76</sup> Interior decoration played an integral role in the development of ceremony through ritual and liturgy. Ritual was a central aspect of the transmission of institutional

<sup>76</sup> Clut to Martinet, 30 July 1885, AD-GLPP-718.

Catholicism and architecture, decoration and material culture were important as a setting for liturgy. Petitot wrote of the interplay between architecture, its decoration and liturgy in his account of the 1869 Christmas mass at Fort Good Hope:

Imagine our Gothic altar, all illuminated from behind with the help of multi-coloured transparencies; altarpiece, benches, tabernacle, shrine, all on fire, the rose window and the flames, the Gothic trefoils, all brilliant in the light, our paintings with large, golden, shining frames on the walls, the flowers all over, the marble shimmering under the feet of the Priest; our little wax Jesus laying in his manger surrounded by flowers, behind him, Mary and Joseph, half-sized, contemplating him; the organ plays Indian and French hymns elevated with enthusiasm by the choir of young Indians.<sup>77</sup>

The decorative scheme of the church played a key role in the creation of ritual space and worked within the liturgy itself, acknowledged by Petitot who continued: “the chapel, altar and the Priest, all were in unison”<sup>78</sup> each an agent in the implantation of Christian knowledge and integration of indigenous Christians into the Church through ceremony. This developed community worship, but also connected the mission to the wider institutional church through universal communitarian practice.<sup>79</sup> Liturgy and decoration drew on European precedent in the creation of a Catholic community bound together

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<sup>77</sup> Petitot to his parents, 28 February 1870, *Missions* 9 (1870): 368. “Imaginez-vous notre autel gothique tout doré, tout illuminé par derrière à l’aide de transparents aux mille couleurs; retables, gradins, tabernacle, tombeau, tout en feu; les rosaces et les flammes, les trèfles gothiques tout éclatants de lumières, nos tableaux à larges cadres dorés brillants sur les murs, es fleurs partout, des marbres miroitant sous les pieds du Prêtre; notre petit Jésus de cire, couché dans sa crèche entourée de fleurs, derrière lui Marie et Joseph, demi-grandeur naturelle, le contemplant; l’orgue jouant nos plus beaux cantiques sauvages et français, enlevés avec entrain par un chœur de jeunes sauvages.”

<sup>78</sup> Petitot to his parents, 28 February 1870, 368. “La chapelle, l’autel et la Prêtre, tout était à l’unisson.”

<sup>79</sup> Carney, “Native-Wilderness,” 64; Kenneth Westhaus, “The Adaptation of the Roman Catholic Church in Canadian Society,” in *Religion in Canadian Society*, ed. Stewart Crysdale and Lee Wheatcroft (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 292.



through belief, ritual and image. The Oblates in the north made these connections explicit in their conscious replication of European forms as well as the importing of visual culture, including statuary and lithographic reproductions of European art as models for church decoration.<sup>80</sup> The size or location of northern churches made no difference to their place within the global church with regard to the application of universal liturgy and visual culture for, as Petitot noted: “it is far from the poor cost of Good Hope, the paintings that ornament a single lateral chapel of Saint-Sulpice; yet both of these houses are the temple of our great God.”<sup>81</sup>

### *In the Field*

However, imagery was also used outside designated Catholic worship space to extend Christianity and its material culture into the indigenous world. The non-settled nature of northern missions made this necessary and the development of visual culture extended the sacred into the secular world and created clear material connections between Catholic practice inside and outside the mission. Particularly, this was achieved by distributing devotional objects, including rosaries, medals and Christian images, such as

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<sup>80</sup>Ancel to Faraud, 31 October 1886, AD-GLPPC-1; Séguin to his sister, 18 May 1885, PAA-PR1971.0220-186.

<sup>81</sup>Petitot to Fabre, 30 May 1870, *Missions* 11 (1873): 156. “...il y a loin de mes pauvres croûtes de Good-Hope aux peintures qui ornent une seule des chapelles latérale de Saint-Sulpice; et cependant l’une comme l’autre de ces maisons son le temple de notre grand Dieu.”

Mary, Christ and biblical scenes, most of which were imported from France.<sup>82</sup> Personal devotions, and their associated material culture were on the rise at this time and their encouragement by the Oblates in the north corresponds with trends in Europe, North America and other mission fields.<sup>83</sup> By encouraging personal devotion amongst converts while they were away from the mission, the Oblates hoped that the Dene would continue to participate in Catholic life in an acceptable lay role within existing institutional practice.<sup>84</sup> Devotions also allowed for linguistic participation, bringing Christianity into everyday life.<sup>85</sup>

The “objects of piety”<sup>86</sup> distributed to encourage devotional practice were viewed as integral technology for Catholic missions.<sup>87</sup> Imported from Europe, these objects were a direct translation of Catholic practice into the mission field as symbols of a universal Catholic culture. They performed similar functions to their architectural counterparts on a smaller scale outside of dedicated Christian space. As didactic tools, they were used to teach indigenous people Christian concepts in the field which they could later use as a

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<sup>82</sup> Hunter Journal, 25 March 1859, CMSA-C/C1/O35/115.

<sup>83</sup> Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 89; 106; Susan O’Brien, “Making Catholic Spaces: Women, Décor and Devotion in the English Catholic Church, 1840-1900,” *Studies in Church History* 28 (1992): 452.

<sup>84</sup> Dichtl, *Frontiers*, 101; McCarthy, *Great River*, 98.

<sup>85</sup> Taves, *Household*, 23.

<sup>86</sup> Clut to Fabre, 25 January 1872, AD-GLPP-698. “...objets de piété...”

<sup>87</sup> Grandin Journal, 15 November 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864):366.

guide even when priests were not present; the use of rosary beads for prayers is an excellent example of this.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly, devotional objects were viewed as having actual power as sacramentals.<sup>89</sup>

Both Faraud and Grouard noted the importance of these objects to channel prayers and elevate the spirit by assisting indigenous Christians in feeling the effects of the divine and developing a deepened personal faith.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, some missionaries remarked that many of the Dene saw the images as God-given and a doorway to the spiritual realm, although there was some concern that the objects were viewed as intrinsically magical, as opposed to a medium through which grace could be attained.<sup>91</sup>

Devotional objects also extended the Christian environment into the wilderness through an integrated material culture.<sup>92</sup> This encouraged continued participation in Christian life in a mission field where indigenous people were away from the mission the majority of the time. Devotional objects encouraged and channelled prayers through universal signs and symbols of faith intimately connected to mission life.<sup>93</sup> Effectively, they acted as an extension of the transformative space of the mission buildings by extending imagery and practice.

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<sup>88</sup> Vegreville to Cox, 3 June 1863, AD-HPF4191.C75R-226; McCarthy, "Theory," 237.

<sup>89</sup> McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 19.

<sup>90</sup> Grouard, *Souvenirs*, 129; Faraud, *Dix-Huit*, 235; Freedberg, *Power of Images*, 162.

<sup>91</sup> Chirauze to Fabre, 25 July 1877, *Missions* 16 (1878): 336; McCarthy, "Theory," 236-37.

<sup>92</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 86; Séguin to Faraud, 16 May 1866, AD-GLPPC-30.

<sup>93</sup> Pasquier, *Fathers*, 66; Légeard to Martinet, n.d., *Missions*, 15 (1877): 314.

Like the church, devotional objects were also a method of local and global community building, extending the communitarian thrust of Catholic worship life into non-Christian space.<sup>94</sup> Kirkby noted in his journal that, when indigenous people were baptized by the Oblates, they were given a medal or crucifix as a mark of belonging to the Catholic community; despite his distinctly anti-Catholic tone, Kirkby's remarks are an accurate depiction of moveable objects and imagery as a tool for community building within Catholic mission.<sup>95</sup> Material culture thus tied individuals to the beliefs and practices of the Oblates, and the Church as a whole, as well as creating a visual marker of membership. In this way, the use of devotional objects anchored in Catholic tradition served to integrate new indigenous Christians into the wider institutional body of the Church and the local Catholic community.

Moveable objects were also used by the priests themselves. The long itinerate circuits undertaken by some missionaries, notably Clut and Petitot, demanded the development of portable solutions to create temporary space appropriate for sacramental worship. Portable space needed to fulfil the same requisites as a permanent church to initiate new converts into the Church and to create differentiation between Christian and non-Christian space. The spaces were of two kinds: HBC space and indigenous space, both of which needed to be reoriented to suit Catholic ritual and transformed to mimic the non-

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<sup>94</sup> McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 45.

<sup>95</sup> Kirkby Journal, 15 June 1861, CMSA-C/C1/O39/66.

secular, non-wilderness Christian environment of the mission station. These changes could be extremely basic, but the use of images and motifs was the primary way in which it was done. For example, on his 1861 tour of the northern posts, Grandin transformed a room at Peel River, noting in his journal: "I lined the walls with paper and images and in a small tabernacle I keep the Holy of Holies."<sup>96</sup>

Grandin's modification was basic, but underlines the kinds of changes made to create a temporary Catholic worship space. More complex solutions were undertaken by Petitot who saw imagery as a fundamentally transportable tool, creating large, moveable objects and decorations that could "roll and then fit on battens"<sup>97</sup> to be set up to transform a variety of spaces. While working around Fort Norman in the late 1860s, he wrote of one of these projects:

I have painted on canvas a Gothic altar, 6-and-a-half feet high, enriched with simulated statues, bells cut-outs and flowers. The tabernacle represents Jesus Christ instituting the Holy Eucharist. Furthermore, I have made two paintings also framed with flowers, representing: the one, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, after Velázquez; the other *Mary Reparatrix*.<sup>98</sup>

Although certainly not comparable to the holistic interior environments created in dedicated church spaces, Petitot's canvas altar served the same function and explicitly

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<sup>96</sup> Grandin Journal, 15 November 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 379. "...j'ai tapissé les murs de papiers et d'image, et dans un tout petit tabernacle je conserve le Saint des Saints."

<sup>97</sup> Petitot to Faraud, 28 February 1867, AD-GLPPC-25. "...se roulent et s'adaptent ensuite sur des liteaux."

<sup>98</sup> Petitot Journal, 30 June 1867, *Missions* 8 (1869): 290. "J'avais donc peint de 6 pieds et demi, enrichi de statuette simulées, de clochetons, de pinacles, de découpures et de fleurs. Le tabernacle représente Jésus-Christ instituant la sainte eucharistie. De plus, j'avais fait deux tableaux, également encadrés de fleurs, représentant : l'un, *Couronnement de la Vierge*, de Velazquez; l'autre, *Mary Reparatrix*."

drew on the same European precedent, but at the same time, responded to the need for portability. By erecting temporary imagery, Petitot modified secular space to create a sacred atmosphere where image and object could teach, inspire and bring grace to new and potential converts in diverse spaces across the north.

The question of modifying indigenous space was less straightforward because of the dominant Christian associations between indigenous architecture and sinful wilderness. However, missionaries recognized that they were often required to perform Mass in them because indigenous structures were often the only spaces available when travelling to camps.<sup>99</sup> Although there are few examples of the exact practice in these situations, an incident recorded by Petitot near Portage La Loche in 1862 speaks to the way in which missionaries approached this issue. He wrote:

I took the opportunity to erect a chapel by way of a conical tent that I tended with white blankets and that I decorated with beautiful coloured engravings. An altar, surrounded by a white cloth, was set there the entire time. It is in this small improvised temple that I had the pleasure of singing the High Mass on Sunday following our arrival, and to celebrate the Holy Mysteries each day.<sup>100</sup>

In Petitot's temporary set up, the lines between the tent and church necessarily became blurred. This could be defended based on the apostolic nature of the mission field and

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<sup>99</sup> Séguin to Mouchette, 20 July 1862, *Missions* 5 (1866): 235.

<sup>100</sup> Petitot to OMI, 31 August 1862, *Missions* 2 (1863): 222. "J'en profitai pour élever une chapelle en manière de tente conique que je tendis avec des couvertures blanches et que j'ornai de belles estampes coloriées. Un autel, entouré de linge blanc, y fut dressé pendant tout ce temps. C'est dans ce petit temple improvisé que j'ai eu le bonheur de chanter la Grand Messe le dimanche qui suivit notre arrivée, et de célébrer les saints mystères chaque jour."

the belief that provisional altars and worship spaces were used in the early church; tents, in particular, were linked to the Tabernacle and their temporary use was an accepted mission practice.<sup>101</sup> The Oblates were by no means the only organization to do this; the apostolic justification of using tents for Christian worship was well-trod territory in nineteenth-century mission.<sup>102</sup> However, Petitot's modification of the space with Catholic objects, images and liturgy uniquely responded to Catholic practice. By creating temporary spaces such as this, Catholic missionaries were able to evangelize amongst indigenous people within an accepted institutional framework based on visual and material culture to extend the Catholic Church to the ends of the earth.<sup>103</sup>

The ability of visual and material culture to function in this way hinged on its consistency. Certainly, there was consistency between the Oblate missions and the rest of the Catholic world as the Oblates actively drew on standardized Catholic motifs based in European precedent. There were some attempts to integrate local elements; in Our Lady of Good Hope, for example, Petitot used snow buntings, as opposed to doves, to represent the Holy Spirit (fig.6.20) and the faces of Dene children on his cherubs (fig.6.21).<sup>104</sup> This kind of modification is consistent with general Catholic practice in the adaptation of imagery to suit diverse audiences, but the basic motifs, scenes and themes

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<sup>101</sup> "Retour de Mission à Murzo," *Missions* 13 (1875) : 38.

<sup>102</sup> Pasquier, *Fathers*, 152. Tents were also used by Protestants and justified by the same reasoning. See: Bremner, *Imperial Gothic*, 28-29.

<sup>103</sup> McCarthy, *Great River*, 86.

<sup>104</sup> Petitot to Fabre, 1 June 1878, *Missions* 17 (1879): 10.



6.20: Snow Buntings, Our Lady of Good Hope. *Author's photo*

from European tradition did not change, reinforcing the visual connection across the global church.<sup>105</sup>

However, for the Dene, consistency across missions was ultimately more important; missionaries recognized and worked towards this to present a unified Catholic front based on shared values and expressions. In 1861 at Fort Chipewyan, Clut wrote to Faraud on just this issue, noting: "I placed the image of the sinner above the door of the vestibule of the chapel...I think you would do well to post the same image at the door of

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<sup>105</sup> Kathleen J. Martin, "'Jesus was not an Indian': Encountering Native Images in the Catholic Church," in *Indigenous Symbols and Practices in the Catholic Church: Visual Culture, Missionization and Appropriation*, ed. Kathleen J. Martin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 139.





6.21:: Dene Children as Cherubs, Our Lady of Good Hope. *Author's photo*

your church.”<sup>106</sup> Clut had posted the image as a representation of the sinner’s fate and place outside the Church, and he recognized the need to communicate these messages consistently and visually across missions. This idea was applied across the Oblate missions, exemplified by Faraud’s desire to see Grouard’s crucifixion scene replicated throughout the north.

### *Conclusion*

The ultimate goal of the development of visual imagery was to portray a consistent spiritual message, and, in doing so, build a unified Catholic community. Under the umbrella of Rome, missionaries hoped to build a Catholic society centred on a value and

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<sup>106</sup> Clut to Faraud, 16 December 1861, AD-GLPP-633. “...j’ai place l’image du pécheur au-dessus de la porte du vestibule de la chapelle; mais vous ne sauriez croire combien cette image a excité de discours...je crois que vous feriez bien de placarder la même image à la porte de votre église.”

belief set which existed both inside and outside the mission station.<sup>107</sup> Like architecture itself, visual culture integrated into buildings and developed separately from them assisted in community development where Christians participated in worship in a way unique to non-settled communities.<sup>108</sup> This community was in opposition to British, Protestant domination of the Canadian north, through the creation of a large, unified body of the faithful tied to a spiritual, not temporal, empire irrespective of race and cultural origin; that the Mackenzie Dene almost exclusively joined the Catholic Church assisted missionaries in realizing this goal and later recognition in treaty negotiations by the federal government of the role of the church confirms it.<sup>109</sup> For Catholic missionaries, visual culture provided a way to create community by promoting spiritual orthodoxy, reinforcing separation from Protestants through differentiation in practice, and bringing people together through a shared Catholic material culture.

When Grandin arrived at Fort Good Hope in 1861, he entered the mission house and went directly to the chapel, a corner curtained off from the rest of the dwelling. Of this moment, he wrote: "I then prostrated myself at the place where our Fathers celebrate each day the Holy Mass, in front of a rough image representing Our Lady of Good Hope,

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<sup>107</sup> Carney, "Native-Wilderness," 64-65.

<sup>108</sup> Duchaussois, *Apôtres*, 123.

<sup>109</sup> René Fumoleau, *As Long As This Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 60-63.

covering by her coat the whole of Christendom.”<sup>110</sup>For Grandin and his fellow missionaries, images were a powerful symbol of the Christendom they were trying to build: one universal, Catholic Church extended throughout the globe. In the far north, where Catholic missionaries had to struggle against both the suspicions of British Protestants and an extremely difficult mission field, images provided a binding point within the community to attract new converts, supported by world-wide, centralized systems. From the “rough image” to the elaborate church which succeeded it, the role of imagery in the Oblates’ northern mission and buildings became a central aspect of their development, built on the theology and ecclesiology of the ultramontane church.

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<sup>110</sup> Grandin Journal, 15 November 1861, *Missions* 3 (1864): 243. “Je me prosternai alors à la place où nos Pères célèbrent chaque jour la sainte Messe, devant une image grossière représentant N.-D. de Bon-Secours couvrant de son manteau la chrétienté tout entière.”

## 7: High Arctic Stations and Indigenous Architecture

One of the missionaries' earliest goals was the evangelism of the Inuit in the High Arctic. By 1890, very little had actually been accomplished in this regard. Despite the romanticism of the High Arctic environment and its people in missionary dialogue as the fulfilment of Christ's call to evangelize to "the ends of the earth", contact with the Inuit had been limited and sporadic, primarily taking shape through early itinerate journeys and contact in conjunction with other indigenous groups at stations including Churchill, Little Whale River and Fort McPherson. A lack of traditional European allies, namely the HBC who had no established posts in this region, made the far north more difficult to establish missions, as did its difficult environment and lack of resources. But, by the mid-1890s, the CMS had established two missions explicitly for the Inuit: Blacklead Island (figure 7.1) under Edmund Peck in 1894 and Herschel Island (figure 7.2) under Isaac Stringer in 1896.

Stringer and Peck faced radically difficult circumstances than their more southerly counterparts because their missions were in the very environment that missionaries originally envisaged when thinking about the north. They also had to work with a different group of non-indigenous people: overwintering Scottish and American whalers whose approach to the missionaries was not regulated by wider organizational policy. Within this framework, the two missions could not develop as their more southerly counterparts, eschewing completely the agricultural model in favour of a mission which integrated more closely with the land and its people, although still attempting to undertake fundamental cultural change on the Inuit.

One of the areas of increased integration was architecture where both missions made use of indigenous buildings and building methods in the establishment of the stations, modifying spatial agency in the mediation of Christianity ideology in the shift from European to indigenous space. This was partially a response to the changing perceptions surrounding the use of non-European architecture within the CMS itself as well as wider understandings of Inuit architecture in particular and its relationship to civilization. It was also partially a response to immediate, practical need, creating two missions with a unique approach to traditional architecture.

### *High Arctic Stations*

Until the establishment of these stations, missionary contact with the Inuit had been limited. Although the Inuit traded at some HBC posts, no mission had been specifically established for them; Little Whale River was seen as the springboard for the growth of Inuit missions in Nunavik but this never materialized.<sup>1</sup> Itinerancy was also limited. Both Bompas and Petitot travelled amongst the Inuvialuit in the Mackenzie Delta in the 1860s and 1870s, but only briefly.<sup>2</sup> Peck, while stationed at Little Whale River, maintained more contact, both at the mission and in his travels to Fort Chimo (Kuujjuaq) in the early 1880s; however, he also ministered to the Cree, splitting his mission between communities.<sup>3</sup> But, despite this limited success, the CMS desired to evangelize the Inuit from the beginning of their northern missions; West had even been encouraged to do so by John Franklin at Churchill in 1823.<sup>4</sup> For Anglicans, Arctic missions were not only tied up in Christ's commandment, but also in the enduring connection between British expansion and the Arctic, pushing them to act in response to the duty to evangelize throughout the empire.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Horden to Wright, 19 September 1876, CMSA-C/C1/O2D/19.

<sup>2</sup>Cody, *Apostle*, 124; Petitot, *Quinze Ans*,

<sup>3</sup>Frédéric Laugrand, Jarich Oosten and François Trudel, *Apostle to the Inuit: The Journals and Ethnographic Notes of Edmund James Peck, The Baffin Years, 1894-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 4-5.

<sup>4</sup>West to CMS, 25 October 1823, CMSA-C/C1/M1.

<sup>5</sup>Venn (1860), in Stock, *History*, 2:331.

As an ethnic group, the Inuit were viewed very differently from their First Nations counterparts because of their location on what the *Intelligencer* called “the frontier of the habitable regions of the earth,”<sup>6</sup> in direct connection to dominant understanding of the High Arctic in British discourse. Furthermore, British perception of the lack of contact with non-indigenous people created a view of the Inuit as virtually untouched and uncorrupted by European influence, increasing the exoticism and appeal of an Inuit mission.<sup>7</sup> The view of the potential for a successful mission was reinforced by the Inuit missions undertaken by the Moravians in Labrador. Established in 1771, the Moravian missions were high-profile, located in British territory, and of significant interest to the British public, setting a strong precedent for the CMS.<sup>8</sup> The CMS heaped the Moravian mission with praise, a hint at their own interests, stating in 1853 that, through the Moravians, “the Gospel has visited the northern-most family of the human race and converted Eskimos have had a place assigned to them in the family of God.”<sup>9</sup> Inuit missions were important, high-profile affairs and, like the Moravians, the CMS was eager to answer the call.

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<sup>6</sup> “The Eskimos,” *CMI* 4 (1853): 80.

<sup>7</sup> Bompas, *Mackenzie River*, 45; Petitot, *Grands Esquimaux*, v; 12; Lofthouse to CMS, August 1893, *CMI* 23 (1893): 216.

<sup>8</sup> Mason, *Moravian Church*, 21.

<sup>9</sup> “The Eskimos,” 76.



**7.1:** *Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island*



**7.2:** *The Mackenzie Delta*



Nevertheless, financial and logistical considerations delayed their establishment. As a global organization, the CMS had to prioritize and the small population and high cost of North American missions made it difficult to justify further investment when compared to more populous fields in Africa and Asia.<sup>10</sup> The lack of established non-indigenous allies in the region also discouraged expansion because of logistic feasibility.

Nevertheless, advocates for Inuit missions pushed hard for the CMS to authorize expansion for, as Peck argued: “These icy regions have been pierced for purposes of discovery and trade, and ought not Christian love and zeal do as much to carry the Eskimos the message of Salvation?”<sup>11</sup>

For Peck, convincing the CMS to establish a mission in the High Arctic was intrinsically connected to solving the logistical problems of transit, provisioning, and housing through a relationship with a European group which could perform a similar function in the facilitation of mission work as the HBC.<sup>12</sup> While in England between 1892 and 1894, he found support in this area from Crawford Noble, a Scottish whaler who agreed to transport Peck, an assistant missionary and provisions for free and to allow them to use

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<sup>10</sup> *Proceedings* (1881), 189; Fenn to Peck, 10 December 1892, GSA-M56-1/XXV-8.

<sup>11</sup> Peck, “A Voice from the Far North,” GSA-M56-1/XVI-d.

<sup>12</sup> Gavin White, “Missionaries and Traders in Baffin Island,” *JCHS* 17 (1975): 2.



7.3: Blacklead Island. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-053579*

his station on Blacklead Island (fig.7.3) in Cumberland Sound as a base.<sup>13</sup> For Peck, this was an ideal arrangement.

Scottish ships had been whaling around Baffin Island since the late-seventeenth century and overwintering in Cumberland Sound since the 1850s to take advantage of the spring whaling season.<sup>14</sup> The stations they established were very small, with only a few rudimentary prefabricated buildings. However, the stations did attract large numbers of

<sup>13</sup> Peck to Higgins, 20 March 1894, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1894/68.

<sup>14</sup> Chelsey W. Sanger, "Scottish Over-Winter Whaling at Cumberland Gulf, Baffin Island," *International Journal of Maritime History* 19 (2007): 184.

Inuit who were a vital part of the whaling industry, providing provisions through trade and working extensively on ships as labour and guides.<sup>15</sup> Peck, who had begun his career as a sailor in the Royal Navy, was aware of the economic relationships between indigenous communities and ships, and saw the development of a good rapport between whalers and missionaries as key to gaining access to the Inuit, building on the CMS' practice in North America of working with commercial agencies.<sup>16</sup>

Peck initially presented the station to the CMS as a temporary base for exploration and assessment of the region, but it was clear from his correspondence that he intended it to be permanent.<sup>17</sup> It was a convenient foothold and central hub for the Baffin region; Peck wrote enthusiastically to the CMS that: "There are facilities here of reaching the Eskimos both in a westerly and northerly direction and this place occupies an almost central position."<sup>18</sup> He arrived in August 1894 with his assistant J.C. Parker and occupied Nobel's house, a two-roomed building which served as their dwelling and a place to meet and teach interested Inuit, much like any other mission house.<sup>19</sup> During their first winter, there was only one other non-indigenous person on the island, Nobel's agent James Mutch; this dynamic remained for most of their tenure in this location.

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<sup>15</sup> Renée Fossett, *In Order to Live Untroubled: Inuit of the Central Arctic, 1550 to 1940* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001), 168-70; Philip Goldring "Inuit Economic Response to Euro-American Contacts, Southeast Baffin Island, 1824-1940," *Historical Papers Canadian Historical Association* 21, no. 1 (1986): 162-65; W. Gillies Ross, "Whaling, Inuit and the Arctic Islands," in *Interpreting Canada's North*, 242-43.

<sup>16</sup> White, "Missionaries and Traders," 3-5.

<sup>17</sup> Peck to Fenn, 20 October 1893, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1894/214.

<sup>18</sup> Peck to Higgins, 5 September 1894, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1894/147.

<sup>19</sup> Peck to Higgins, 13 September 1894, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1894/146.

However, they lacked a suitable worship space and the house was too small to accommodate all who were interested. With no immediate resources to erect a European-style building, Peck turned to local material and technology. He explained:

As the Eskimo here live in tents made of seal skins, the thought occurred to us that we might make a kind of tabernacle in the wilderness, using skins for a covering and the bones of whales for a frame. We therefore invited each family to bring one seal skin and yesterday, to our delight, they brought quite a number...bone will make a capital frame for our tent. They form, when joined together, a semi-circle with a radius of about six feet. The skins, when sewn together, will be stretched on top of this frame and the people will sit in rows inside.<sup>20</sup>

The church was completed in just four days in October 1894 and served as the mission's worship space until 1897.<sup>21</sup>

In a 1900 interview with the *Church Missionary Gleaner*, Peck identified it as a *tupiq*, the summer tent used by the Cumberland Sound Inuit, generally formed of a half cone with a ridgepole creating a long, rectangular space (fig.7.4).<sup>22</sup> Traditionally, *tupiqs* used wooden poles but whalebone construction was still consistent with Inuit practice. No image of the *tupiq* church survives, although an image of Julian Bilby, who came out to assist Peck in 1898, with what is identified as a *tupiq* frame also appears in the

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<sup>20</sup> Peck to CMS, 24 September 1894, *CMI* 20 (1895): 39.

<sup>21</sup> Peck to Higgins, 10 October 1894, CMSA-G1/C1/O1894/157; Lewis, *E.J. Peck*, 217.

<sup>22</sup> "Among the Eskimo of the Greenland Sea," *CMG* 27 (1900): 9; Molly Lee and Gregory A. Reinhardt, *Eskimo Architecture: Dwelling and Structure in the Early Historic Period* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2003), 56.



7.4: Edmund Peck with *tupia*. *Anglican Church of Canada. General Synod Archives. P7502-45h*



7.5: Julian Bilby and *tupiq* frame. Illustration from *Church Missionary Gleaner* 27 (1900): 7.

*Gleaner* fig.7.5). Other images show these structures in the context of Peck's mission, demonstrating his proximity and familiarity with this building tradition (fig.7.6).

Peck and missionaries with whom he worked throughout his tenure in Cumberland Sound also made frequent use of *igluit*, the snow houses most closely associated with Inuit architecture, in their travels around the region when they would stay with Inuit



7.6: Group of Inuit and *tupiq* at Frobisher Bay. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7502-34*

families or when an *iglu* was constructed for single-night stays by their Inuit guides.<sup>23</sup>

This was consistent with the CMS' itinerate practice throughout North America.

However, a modified *iglu* was also used at the Kerkerten whaling station in 1895, and again in 1899, as what Peck called "our Arctic church"; by omitting the top of the dome, a tall enough space was created for worship and preaching.<sup>24</sup> These types of structures were used consistently throughout the Baffin region, and reported on to the CMS and its publications.

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<sup>23</sup> Peck, "Unto the Uttermost Part of the Earth," *CMG* 30 (1903): 67; Peck Journal, 18 March 1901, in Laugrand et al, *Apostle*, 135.

<sup>24</sup> Peck Journal, 11 May 1895, in Laugrand et al, *Apostle*, 59.



7.7: Herschel Island. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7517-190*

At the same time, the CMS was establishing a station at Herschel Island (fig.7.7) under Stringer, a Canadian missionary recruited by Reeve specifically to evangelize the Mackenzie Delta Inuvialuit. Like its contemporary, it was located at a whaling base, but the whalers were Americans and had no formal arrangement with the CMS. However, there were significantly more of them, with fifteen ships overwintering on Herschel Island in 1895, although this decreased rapidly throughout the decade alongside the



western Arctic fishery.<sup>25</sup> Like at HBC posts, Stringer was in a position where he was also ministering to a group of non-indigenous people, but his focus remained the Inuvialuit.

Reeve described Herschel Island as: “the most northerly inhabited spot in the British dominions, and perhaps the most inaccessible, a bleak, desolate, treeless island,”<sup>26</sup> but it was an excellent base for a mission. Despite its limited resources, the presence of whalers allowed missionaries to develop a European ally; although missionaries saw negative effects in the presence of the ships, particularly in the liquor trade, the whalers welcomed the missionaries, particularly the captains who saw a benefit to their crews in a religious presence.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the Inuvialuit were attracted to the island by the opportunities for trade and employment with the whaling vessels, although the island had long been used as a camp and gathering, giving Stringer both resources and access at central base.<sup>28</sup>

A permanent mission was established in 1896. However, Stringer, while based at Fort McPherson, had visited the island since the early 1890s as part of a larger circuit

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<sup>25</sup> James W. Vanstone, “Commercial Whaling in the Arctic Ocean,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1958): 3-6; Ross, “Arctic Islands,” 237.

<sup>26</sup> Reeve in Stock, *History*, 3:624.

<sup>27</sup> Ken Coates and William Morrison, *Land of the Midnight Sun: A History of the Yukon* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1988), 128-33; Thomas Stone, “Atomistic Order and Frontier Violence: Miners and Whalemen in the Nineteenth Century Yukon,” *Ethnology* 30, no. 4 (1983): 333; Whittaker to CMS, 23 May 1906, *AL* (1906): 506.

<sup>28</sup> Ross, “Arctic Islands,” 243; Coates and Morrison, *Midnight Sun*, 117.

throughout the Delta.<sup>29</sup> While working on the island during this period, Stringer made use of existing infrastructure; the whaling station was composed of a range of prefabricated, imported buildings which he used as worship spaces, primarily a billiards hall erected in 1893, and he generally stayed in the captains' lodgings.<sup>30</sup> Services for the Inuvialuit were held elsewhere, in large tents belonging to them or lent by the whalers. A small house erected by the whalers around 1895 was eventually used for this.<sup>31</sup> However, initial contact was very informal; as Stringer reported to friends at home: "We would sit around in the igloos or outside and on sleds and have a talk."<sup>32</sup>

Stringer returned to the island in 1896 with his new wife Sadie and her uncle W.D. Young to establish a permanent mission with funds donated from the whalers, although they returned to Fort McPherson that winter.<sup>33</sup> They purchased and moved into a sod house in summer 1896 and then into a second similar structure in autumn of that year. With a new wife, and soon a young family, Stringer needed a living space separate from that of the whalers for privacy and to model the Christian home.<sup>34</sup> Church services continued to be held in the most convenient available building, but infant lessons were held in the house.

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<sup>29</sup> Stringer to Sadie Stringer, 16 June 1892; Stringer to friends, 3 June 1893, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

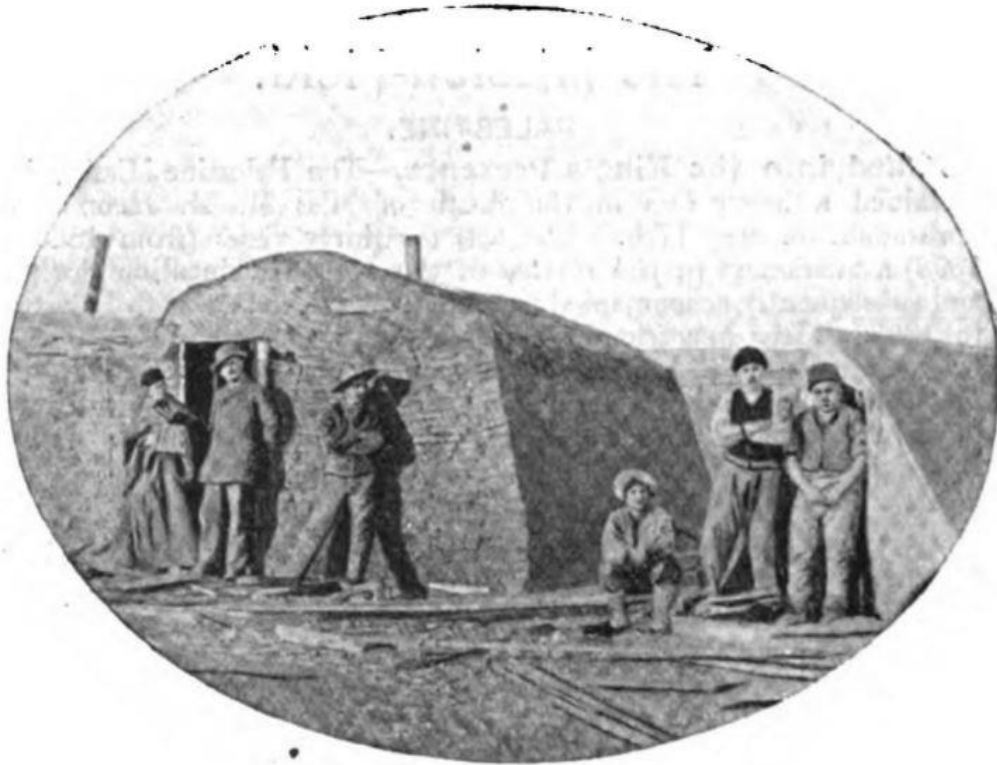
<sup>30</sup> Stringer to Reeve, 9 July 1895, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

<sup>31</sup> Stringer to Reeve, 9 July 1895; Stringer to CMS, 1 February 1897, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

<sup>32</sup> Stringer to friends, 3 June 1893, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Stone, "Whalers and Missionaries at Herschel Island," *Ethnohistory* 28 (1981): 107; Stringer to Reeve, 9 July 1895, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

<sup>34</sup> Reeve to CMS, n.d., *CMI* 21 (1896): 399; Sadie Stringer Journal, 10 September 1896, GSA-M74-3/2-A-1.

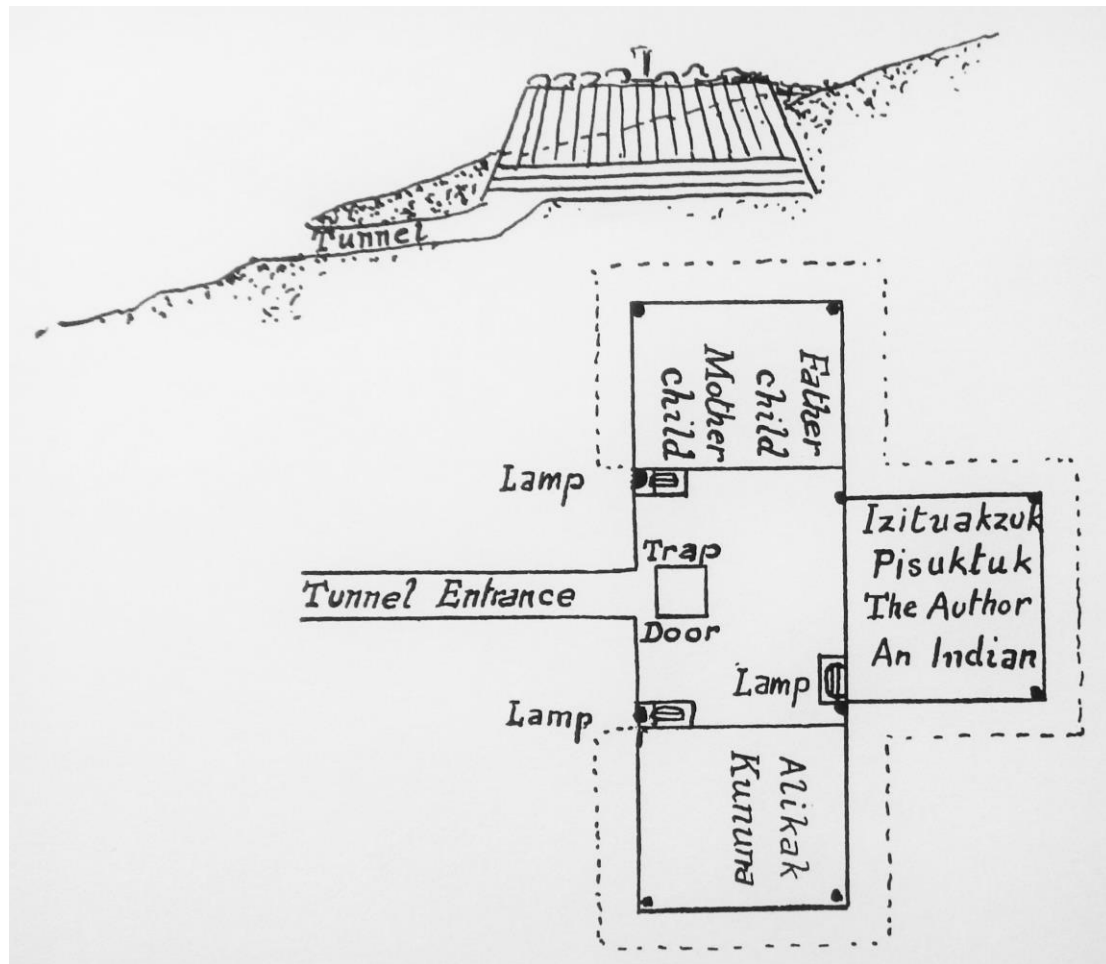


7.8: Original Mission House, Herschel Island. Illustration from *Church Missionary Gleaner* 29 (1902): 105.

An image of the house in the *Gleaner* in 1902 (fig.7.8) shows that the houses were modified *igluryuaq*, the traditional semi-subterranean Inuvialuit sod house, constructed of an internal wooden frame and covered externally with sod (fig. 7.9).<sup>35</sup> Sod was readily available as was driftwood timber washed from inland into the Delta.<sup>36</sup> They were used extensively throughout the Delta region primarily as winter homes, and in permanent camps such as at Kitigaaryuit, the largest Inuvialuit settlement in the region, which

<sup>35</sup> Ishmael Alunik, Eddie D. Kolausok and David Morrison, *Across Time and Tundra: The Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 19; Derek Smith, "Mackenzie Delta Eskimo," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 5, *Arctic*, ed. William C. Sturtevant and David Damas (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1984), 347.

<sup>36</sup> Lee and Reinhard, *Eskimo Architecture*, 73-75.



7.9: Igluryuaq. Illustration from C.E. Whitaker, *Arctic Eskimo: A Record of Fifty Years' Experience and Observation Among the Eskimo*, 95.

Stringer visited extensively throughout the 1890s (fig. 7.10).<sup>37</sup> During his visits throughout the Delta, Stringer documented these structures and was familiar with their construction and use (fig. 7.11), even building one himself at Kitigaaryuit in 1894.<sup>38</sup> At Kitigaaryuit, Stringer also made use of the *qatdjgi*, or “men’s house”, a central gathering space in Inuvialuit settlements which used the same materials as the *igluryuaq*, but were

<sup>37</sup> T. Max Freisen, “Kitigaaryuit: A Portrait of the Mackenzie Inuit in the 1890s, Based on the Journals of Isaac O. Stringer,” *Arctic Anthropology* 41 (2004): 222-24.

<sup>38</sup> Stringer to friends, 27 November 1894, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

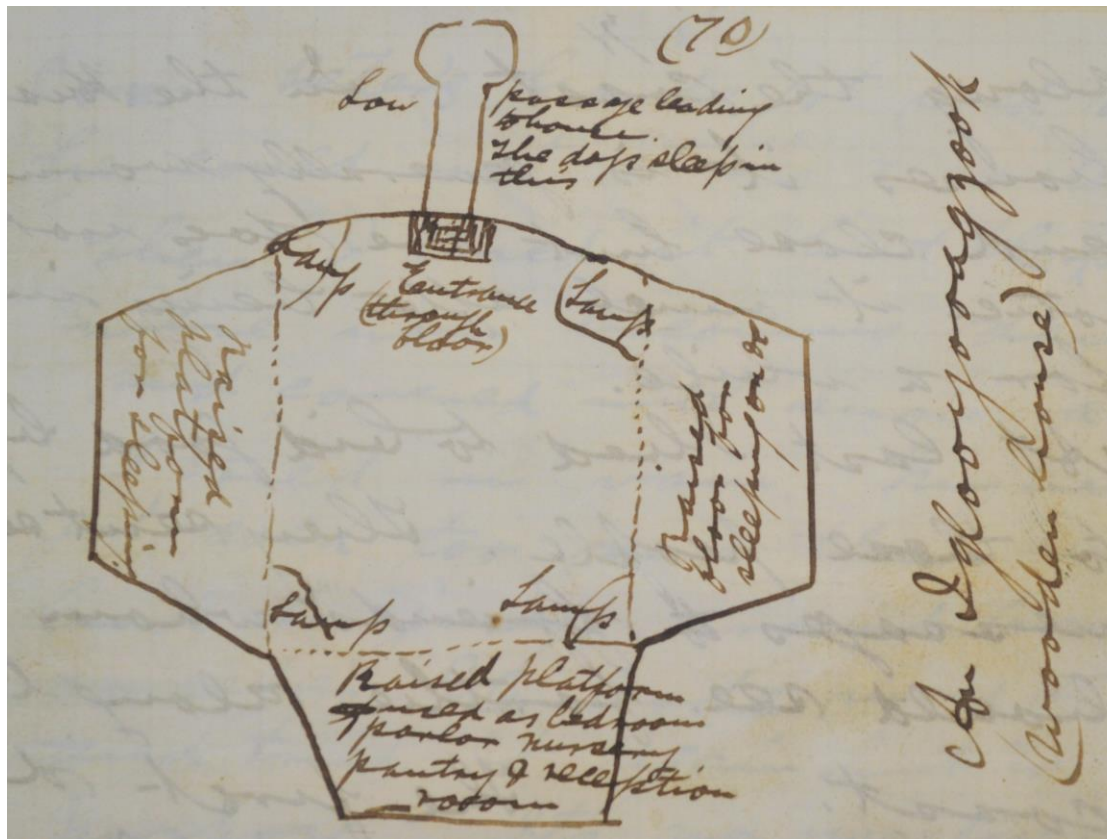


7.10: Igluryuaq. Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7517-268

larger and with a different spatial arrangement.<sup>39</sup> Stringer used the *qatdjigi* as a worship space, making use of its function as a place of community gathering in order to draw

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<sup>39</sup> Alison K. Hoagland, *The Buildings of Alaska* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 9.



7.11: Drawing of an Igluryuaq by Isaac Stringer, 1893. Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, M74-3/1-A-1

people in.<sup>40</sup> Stringer also used *igluit* throughout the Delta in the winter to both stay and teach in.<sup>41</sup>

The house shown in the *Gleaner*, however, is not a completely traditional structure. The chimney and associated stove are American imports. Furthermore, the entranceway is also modified as it features a fully above-ground doorway, departing from the traditional semi-subterranean tunnel entranceway. However, increasing European influence

<sup>40</sup> Stringer to CMS, 1 February 1897, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

<sup>41</sup> Stringer to Sadie Stringer, 24 November 1893, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.



7.11: Igluryuaq, Herschel Island. *Library and Archives Canada, PA102528*

throughout the nineteenth century made these sorts of modifications common and there are other examples of this on Herschel Island (fig. 7.12).<sup>42</sup> Despite these discrepancies, Stringer's home on Herschel Island remains fundamentally an indigenous building and his practice throughout the Delta shows his willingness to use them.

### *Indigenous Architecture and "Native Agency"*

For both Stringer and Peck, the use of indigenous structures was convenient and practical, taking advantage of traditional technology that responded better to the

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<sup>42</sup> Hoagland, *Alaska*, 4; Smith, "Mackenzie Delta Eskimo," 350.

environment and was easier to erect than European alternatives. Yet this seem a stunning departure from CMS practice, as well as British views on indigenous architecture in light of the civilizing mission. But, when examined as part of larger discussions around the use of non-European architecture in missions as well as perceptions of Inuit architecture in textual sources, their usage begins to make more sense, beyond questions of simple practicality.

As an organization, the CMS' approach to indigenous architecture was complex. When approaching mission from the perspective of the interrelatedness of Christianity and civilization and associated perspectives on indigenous architecture, the transplantation of European architectural norms into the mission field made sense. But, at the same time, there was consistent discussion within the CMS from the 1860 onward as to the appropriateness of European architecture from non-European congregations in the creation of lasting Christian communities.

Central to this discussion was Venn's native agency policy. Although advocating primarily for the development of self-sufficient native congregations, Venn nevertheless desired that missionaries engage with local cultures and integrate some aspects into Christian practice insofar as they did not contradict Christian values and beliefs. Manifested most strongly through the use of indigenous language, this mandate was also applied to other



areas such that “[in] the mission field...the vernaculars are scrupulously utilized.”<sup>43</sup>At the 1860 Liverpool Conference on Missions, which set the tone for CMS policy for the next thirty years, this discussion was brought up in relation to architecture, responding to general concerns, as articulated in the *Intelligencer*, that “Christianity clothed in a form so rigidly and unalterably Anglican...can never adapt itself to the requirements of a new country.”<sup>44</sup>European buildings, particularly Gothic churches, were seen as “out of place,”<sup>45</sup>recognising that their lack of suitability for a “native” church and, simultaneously, promoting the idea that the erection of indigenous architecture encouraged native agency through explicit participation in the church’s spiritual life through building.<sup>46</sup> These ideas were applied in the mission field, particularly in India where some, but not all, missionaries went to great lengths to avoid “Anglicizing the natives”<sup>47</sup> by using local architectural traditions (fig.7.13). That the CMS, as a rule, was not wedded to the Gothic Revival style as a tool for identity-building, rather placing emphasis on liturgy, evangelical practice and practicality, made this shift easier, especially in churches where style was less important than functionality.<sup>48</sup>

The application of these ideas to missions in India was justifiable because the architecture of the Indian subcontinent was permanent and viewed as technologically

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<sup>43</sup> “The Organizations of Native Churches,” *CMI* 5 (1869): 99. See also: Shenk, “Instructions,” 474.

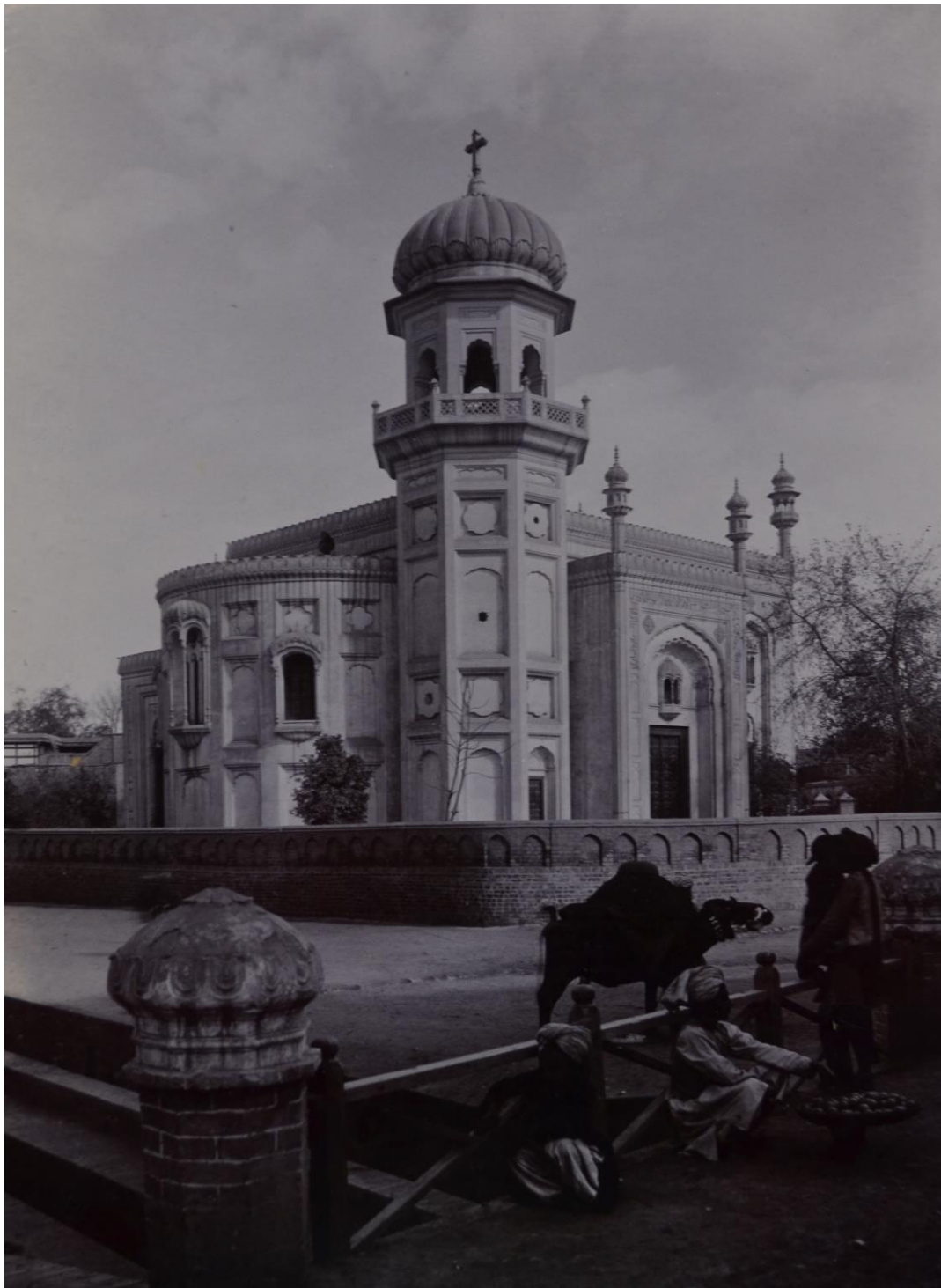
<sup>44</sup> “Native Churches,” 315-16. See also: Williams, “Not Transplanting,” 147.

<sup>45</sup> *Conference on Missions Held in 1860 in Liverpool*, 284-85.

<sup>46</sup> Stock, *History*, 2:418.

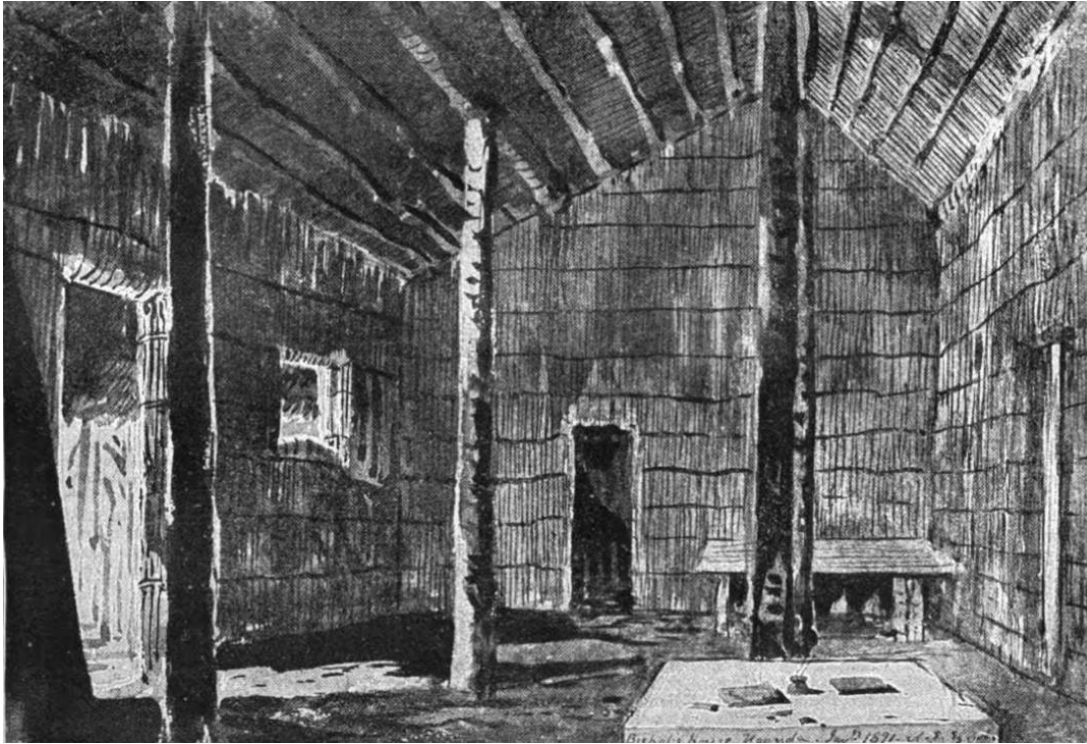
<sup>47</sup> William Pakenham Walsh, “Brief Sketches of Church Missionary Labours,” *CMG* 17 (1888): 63. This also occurred in New Zealand. See Sundt, *Whare Karakia*, 88-131.

<sup>48</sup> Bremner, *Imperial Gothic*, 244-45.



**7.13:** All Saints' Memorial Church, Peshawar, Pakistan, 1888. *Church Missionary Society Archives, ACC532-Z10A*

*This church is one of the most well-known examples of using local architectural traditions in CMS missions.*



**7.14:** Room in the Bishop's Palace, Mengo, Uganda. Illustration from *Church Missionary Gleaner* 19 (1892): 25

civilized, if still non-Christian. This practice became more difficult in areas where non-permanent architecture and its relationship with wilderness clashed with Christian understanding of faith's manifestation in architectural permanence. Nevertheless, by the 1890s, in eastern equatorial Africa, a so-called "primitive" mission field, a significant collection of mission structures, including churches, schools and mission houses, were: "built, in the native method, of reeds fastened together with strips of the bark of a willow-like shrub"<sup>49</sup> with regional variations, including the use of wattle and

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<sup>49</sup> "Our Uganda Pictures," *CMG* 25 (1898): 136.

daub.<sup>50</sup> There was a clear understanding that these buildings were impermanent, but they were nevertheless used extensively, including for important structures such as the Bishop's palace and church at Mengo, Uganda, constructed around 1889 (fig. 7.14).<sup>51</sup> Likewise, they were praised in evangelical publications for their beauty, utility and appropriateness, even if they were destined to last only a short time, presumably for their relationship to the development of native agency and discussions around architectural appropriateness in non-European settings.<sup>52</sup>

Like their African counterparts, the buildings erected by Peck and Stringer also received positive reports in evangelical publications.<sup>53</sup> However, their role as appropriate worship spaces for Christian mission does not correlate with dominant understandings of the relationship between indigenous architecture and non-Christian wilderness within the dialogue surrounding the Arctic missions; despite CMS policy, wider understandings of architectural permanence and Christianity, in contrast to the changeable natural world, made the development of indigenous-centred architectural practice difficult to justify, particularly in North America where these connections were strongly embedded in missionary dialogue and practice. The shift by both Peck and Stringer, however, towards indigenous architecture needs to be understood in relation to discussions around Inuit

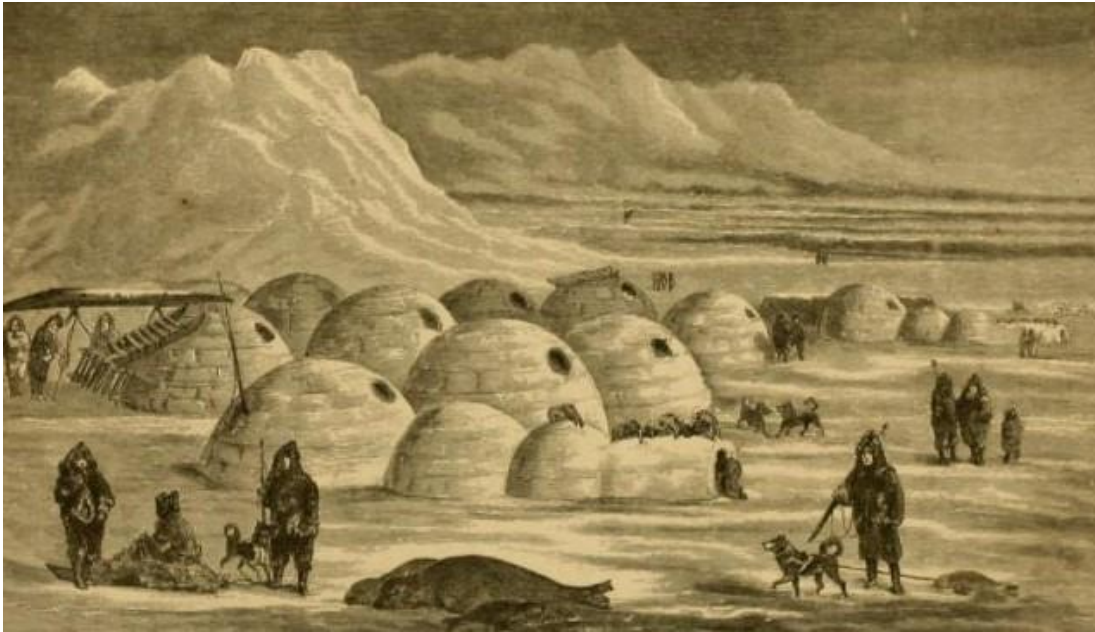
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<sup>50</sup> "Views of Taita Churches," *CMG* 18 (1891): 84.

<sup>51</sup> "The Bishop's 'Palace' in Uganda," *CMG* 19 (1892): 25.

<sup>52</sup> "Taita Churches," 84.

<sup>53</sup> For example: "Among the Eskimo," 9; Reeve, "Amongst the Eskimo," *CMG* 29 (1902): 105.



**7.15:** “Snow Village”. Illustration from Charles Francis Hall, *Arctic Researches and Life Among the Esquimaux*, 269

architecture specifically, and its perceived relationship to both European practice and that of other indigenous traditions.

Because of the scientific and documentary nature of Arctic expeditions, Inuit architecture was widely reported on in British publications and known more extensively than other North American indigenous architectural traditions. Unlike most indigenous architecture, generally presented as being limited to tents, Inuit architecture was regarded with a certain amount of interest, primarily because of the technological and novel value of the *iglu*, widely associated with Inuit culture and the northern

landscape.<sup>54</sup> An impression of an *iglu* by explorer Charles Francis Hall in 1865 summarized the general British understanding of these buildings. He wrote that he: “found two Esquimaux...making an igloo, or snow house. In a short time, it was finished and I was quite surprised at its beauty...it was one of the most chaste pieces of architecture I ever saw.”<sup>55</sup> Hall’s characterization of the *iglu* as architecture itself is significant, as is his correlation between the structure and the Christian values of chastity, but his words demonstrate the general tone taken around Inuit architecture, strengthened by visual representations (fig. 7.15), as a specific technological achievement that set it above the “wild” indigenous architecture found elsewhere.<sup>56</sup>

While the *iglu* dominated European dialogue, there were also discussions of other Inuit building types. Discussion of the *tupiq* is limited, as most Europeans, including Hall, viewed them as essentially tents.<sup>57</sup> There were, however, more detailed discussions of sod structures, notably by John Richardson after encountering the Inuvialuit at Nuvugaq in 1825. Richardson provided descriptions of both the *igluryuaq* and *qatdjigi* and was clearly impressed by the building technology, both intrinsically and as an indication of Inuvialuit character and ability (fig. 7.16).<sup>58</sup> Of the *qatdjigi* at Nuvugaq, he wrote: “The general attention to comfort in the construction of the village and erection of a building

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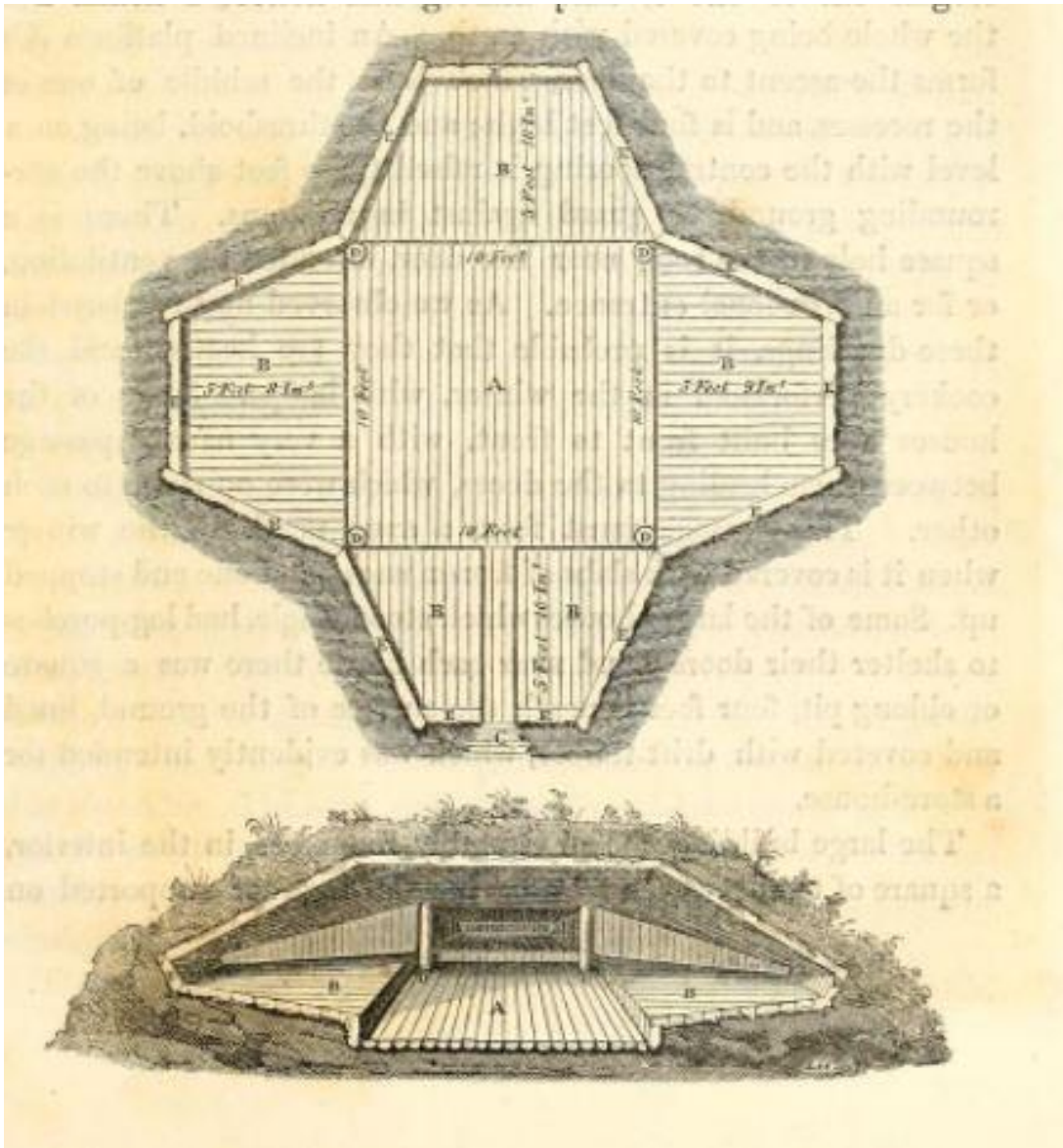
<sup>54</sup> Lee and Reinhardt, *Eskimo Architecture*, 1; David, *British Imagination*, 139.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Francis Hall, *Arctic Researches and Life Among the Esquimaux* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), 176.

<sup>56</sup> John Franklin and John Richardson, *Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Sea, in the Years 1825, 1826 and 1827* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Carey, 1828), 250-51.

<sup>57</sup> Hall, *Arctic Researches*, 161-62.

<sup>58</sup> Richardson, in *Narrative*, 215-18.



**7.16:** Sod House Plan. Illustration from John Franklin and John Richardson, *Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Sea, in the Years 1825, 1826 and 1827*, 215

of such magnitude, requiring a union of purpose in a considerable number of people are evidence of no small progress towards civilization.”<sup>59</sup> Richardson still saw the Inuvialuit as fundamentally uncivilized but the erection of permanent structures in settlements

<sup>59</sup> Richardson, in *Narrative*, 217.





7.17: Interior of an Igluryuaq. Illustration from Émile Petitot, *Les Grands Esquimaux*, 192

was, to him, an indication that their level of civilization was higher than that of the other indigenous people in relation to the general European understanding of civilization being defined by technological and societal achievements. Architecture, therefore, identified the Inuvialuit as less primitive and less entwined with the wilderness because of their technological achievements and implications on community action which rose above traditional British understandings of North American indigenous communities.

Another interesting and relevant discussion comes from Petitot in his 1887 text, *Les Grand Esquimaux*, where he discusses his impressions of the Inuvialuit from his 1865



and 1866 journeys to Fort Anderson. Petitot was particularly impressed by Inuvialuit building technology which he, like others, saw as technologically skilled and climactically appropriate (fig. 7. 17).<sup>60</sup> He viewed them more favourably than other indigenous architecture, writing: "In comparison to all that I had already seen and experienced with regard to the homes of the savages...these Eskimo houses appear to me to have all the comfort and ease that one can obtain at 69° north of latitude."<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Petitot saw their value because they were fixed in villages the Inuvialuit used for portions of the year, writing: "These houses radiate a certain ease, such as befits a sedentary people; that which cannot be afforded to nomads."<sup>62</sup> Like Richardson, Petitot did not see the Inuvialuit as civilized, but their architecture moved away from the wilderness paradigm, and towards something that reflected a more developed culture. Even if the Inuit were, in missionaries' eyes, still uncivilized, their technological achievements gave their material culture some merit and allowed it to be reasonably used within the context of missionary activity where the nuanced differences between different types of indigenous architecture were seen as important from the perspective of civilization.<sup>63</sup> With this in mind, the use of indigenous architecture by Peck and Stringer not only responds to wider discussions surrounding indigenous architecture in

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<sup>60</sup> Petitot, *Grand Esquimaux*, 49.

<sup>61</sup> Petitot, *Grand Esquimaux*, 51. "En comparaison de tout ce que j'avais déjà vu et expérimenté en fait de demeures sauvages...ces maisons esquimaudes me parurent posséder tout le confort et l'aisance que l'on peut posséder se procurer sous 69° de latitude nord."

<sup>62</sup> Petitot, *Grand Esquimaux*, 52. "...ces maisons respirent une certaine aisance, telle qu'il convient à des gens sédentaires; ce que ne peuvent se permettre des nomades."

<sup>63</sup> Rutherford, *White Man's God*, 46.



**7.18:** Mission at Blacklead Island. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-053578*

the CMS, but also a different understanding of Inuit architecture, making the move away from indigenous architectural traditions less urgent.

### *Return to European Forms*

However, despite these discussions, indigenous buildings at both Herschel and Blacklead Islands were quickly replaced with imported, prefabricated structures. On Blacklead Island, a new worship space, imported from Scotland, was erected in summer 1897.



**7.19:** Mission at Blacklead Island. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-053629*

Brought out by Nobel, the two-room structure was initially intended to be a new mission house. However, because the congregation had grown significantly, it was used as a church between 1897 and 1898, while the old house that belonged to Nobel was enlarged, then modified to become the church and school in 1898; the new building then transitioned back to being a house (figs. 7.18 and 7.19).<sup>64</sup> Neither building is stylistically distinct, but they were definitively non-indigenous and differed sharply from Inuit building practice. To further develop the station, and provide medical services, missionary Edgar Greenshield, who arrived in 1901, erected a hospital from imported

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<sup>64</sup> Peck Journal, 28 January 1901, in Laugrand et al, *Apostle*, 130-31.



7.20: Construction of the hospital at Blacklead Island. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7502-35*

materials in 1902 (fig. 7.20).<sup>65</sup> It was clearly differentiated from indigenous buildings and was intended to be so in order to provide specialized, hygienic space for medical care such that: “we shall be able to receive the worst cases of our sick and suffering Eskimos and treat them with far greater advantage than we can in their snow houses or seal-skin tents.”<sup>66</sup> On one hand, this was a practical development to provide specialized medical care, but, on the other, it assumed the unhygienic nature of indigenous buildings, perpetuating stereotypes about cleanliness and the indigenous home.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Archibald Fleming, *Perils of the Polar Pack: Or, the Adventures of the Reverend E.W.T. Greenshield* (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, 1932), 57.

<sup>66</sup> Greenshield to CMS, 19 February 1904, *AL* (1903): 731.

<sup>67</sup> Best, *Three Voyages*, 138.



**7.21:** Community House, Herschel Island. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7517-185*

*The community house is on the right.*

Similarly, the mission on Herschel Island moved quickly into European-style quarters. Discussions of non-indigenous buildings had begun as early as 1895 but nothing was constructed, in Stringer's words, "because of the uncertainty of this place remaining a permanent whaling station."<sup>68</sup> In 1898, the Stringers moved into the community building (fig.7.21), constructed by the whalers in 1893, no longer in use because of the rapid

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<sup>68</sup> Stringer to CMS, 1 February 1897, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.



7.22: Interior, Herschel Island Mission House. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives. P7517-183*

decline in overwintering whalers.<sup>69</sup> As a public building, it was adaptable to a range of purposes and the Stringers also used it as a day school, church and medical facility.<sup>70</sup> This was a clear step away from the sod house stylistically, as well as functionally, particularly in its large, flexible interior space (fig.7.22), decorated and partitioned to reflect the dominant understanding of domestic space. Although a purpose-built mission house was not erected until 1915 (fig. 7.23), the move into the community building

<sup>69</sup> Stringer to Newton, 10 January 1889, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1; "North-West Canada," *CMI* 23 (1898):539.

<sup>70</sup> "Notes on I.O. Stringer, Yukon Diocese," GSA-M74-3/3-J; Whittaker *AL* (1906):505-506.





7.23: New Herschel Island Mission House, after 1915. Yukon Archives, PHO378 89/41-66

signals the move away from Inuvialuit building techniques as part of the material fabric of the mission.<sup>71</sup>

The rapid move away from indigenous building techniques by both Stringer and Peck seems to go against the connections made between Venn's native agency policy and architecture at the 1860 Liverpool Conference. Peck, in particular, was a strong advocate of Venn's policies, pushing a strategy which focused on evangelism alone, although also incorporating charitable activities such as medicine and education.<sup>72</sup> In particular, Peck advocated for the growth of indigenous churches expanded through indigenous

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<sup>71</sup> Doug Olynyk, "Beginnings," in *Herschel Island Qikiqtaryuk: A Natural and Cultural History of Yukon's Arctic Island* (Calgary: Wildlife Management Advisory Council, 2012), 205.

<sup>72</sup> Laugrand et al, *Apostle*, 9.

leadership.<sup>73</sup> His commitment is firmly in opposition to that of many of his North American colleagues who did not believe indigenous people had the capacity to expand and develop their own churches.<sup>74</sup>

Nevertheless, Peck was a supporter and admirer of the Moravians, who pursued a distinctly civilizing mission in Labrador with a heavy focus on the creation of large architectural complexes.<sup>75</sup> Peck had been aware of their mission since arriving on Hudson Bay, even using some of their textual resources.<sup>76</sup> In 1909, Peck visited the Moravian mission at Hopedale (fig. 7.24), writing of his impression:

For many a year I had longed to see this place. The work of the noble Moravian Brethren had become a familiar name to me.... Sheltered from the North, and nestled in a small valley with a few trees, giving some signs of life and beauty in the otherwise barren scenery, were placed a number of buildings. These consisted of a dwelling house, a church, stores and a shed for wood.... The fine spacious church, so plain and so clean, was just suited to the needs of the Eskimos. The dwelling house is built in a strong substantial manner.<sup>77</sup>

Peck was impressed by Hopedale, but nevertheless chose to develop his mission differently. Similarly, Stringer also saw civilizing mission as positive, but, at the same time, that did not translate into his work on Herschel Island. After becoming Bishop of Yukon in 1905, Stringer tended towards a civilization approach to mission, but, unlike his

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<sup>73</sup> Peck to Fenn, 20 October 1893, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1893/214. See also: Christopher Trott, "Mission and Opposition in North Baffin Island," *JCHS* 40 (1998): 31.

<sup>74</sup> Abel, "Bompas," 113-25.

<sup>75</sup> Mason, *Moravian Church*, 20-22.

<sup>76</sup> Stock, *History*, 3:245.

<sup>77</sup> Peck Journal, 1909, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1909/73.





7.24: Moravian Mission at Hopedale, Labrador. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7502-57b*

predecessor Bompas, he advocated for aspects of Venn's policy including the use of indigenous language and teachers.<sup>78</sup> Although he advocated for agricultural missions in areas of incoming settlers, he crucially stated in an 1908 lecture that "location and circumstance demand many different ways of dealing with the Indian,"<sup>79</sup> reflecting on his northern work where evangelism without civilization was the only realistic alternative. However, both he and his wife saw the Inuvialuit as uncivilized, and sought

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<sup>78</sup> Kenneth Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 124.

<sup>79</sup> Stringer, "Church's Responsibility," GSA-M74-3/1-C-1.



**7.25:** Outdoor service, Blacklead Island, n.d.. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7502-12a*

to change their culture with regard to morality and practices associated with spirituality including medicine, if not their overall lifestyle and architectural practice.<sup>80</sup>

With these two understandings of mission, the use of indigenous buildings and their subsequent development into non-indigenous structures at Herschel and Blacklead Islands fits into an approach to mission that saw permanent buildings as desirable, but not necessary, to the immediate task of conversion. On one hand, there was a clear

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<sup>80</sup> Rutherford, *White Man's*, 36-38.

issue of practicality. Initially, the use of indigenous structures had been practical for situations where building non-indigenous structures was very difficult. As they consolidated, however, the use of non-indigenous buildings began to make more sense, if not to modify and integrate Inuit culture into Christian practice, then for the missionaries themselves.

Part of this arose from the need to have a permanent and stable space, despite dominant perceptions of Inuit architecture as compared to their First Nations counterparts; Peck's *tupiq* church, for example, was destroyed by hungry dogs in the winter of 1895, and, although it was repaired, this was seen as an indication that something else was needed to ensure a consistent provision of worship space.<sup>81</sup> Peck was also happy to conduct services outdoors but this was not always practical (fig.7.25). Similarly, although Stringer had every intention of continuing to live in the sod house, the community house was a better solution for the provision of predictable space for mission activities.<sup>82</sup> The early years of his mission had been characterized by inconsistent allocation of available space, particularly because the sod house was quite small, and the ability to have one building which could be used for all of mission functions allowed it to consolidate and stabilize.

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<sup>81</sup> Peck Journal, 23 February 1895, in Laugrand et al, *Apostle*, 56.

<sup>82</sup> Stringer to Newton, 10 January 1898, GSA-M74-3/1-A-1.

Another key consideration was comfort for the missionaries. This was particularly important in houses. Peck wrote in his journal that, in order for missionaries to live and function in such a desolate environment, “we must have, for one thing, a proper dwelling.”<sup>83</sup> For Stringer, comfort in the sod house was most likely limited; although he wrote little about it, a 1905 Northwest Mounted Police report from Herschel Island noted that the sod houses were “very damp and dark.”<sup>84</sup> In an alien environment, the missionaries sought comfort and protection in a known and familiar structural form, reflecting the needs and expectations of missionaries, as opposed to an attempt to alter the lives of the Inuit in significant ways.

However, on a higher level the shift reflects wider ideas about the evolution of architecture in mission, summarized in an 1892 article in the *Gleaner* by W.J. Richards entitled “The Genesis of a Church” which articulated the understanding that architecture, specifically of churches, went through phases as missions developed, which encouraged native agency and built a stable mission. Richards proposed that indigenous people did not need a specific church in order to worship, a view explicitly supported by Peck and by Stringer in practice.<sup>85</sup> Peck, in particular, articulated that a dedicated church was not necessary to build a relationship with God, writing of his experience around Little Whale River:

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<sup>83</sup> Peck Journal, 28 January 1901, in Laugrand et al, *Apostle*, 131.

<sup>84</sup> NWMP Report, 1905, in William Morrison, “The Mounted Police on Canada’s Northern Frontier, 1896-1940,” (PhD Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1973), 159.

<sup>85</sup> W.J. Richards, “The Genesis of a Church,” *CMG* 19 (1902): 36.

What a curious site, this Indian tent, with moss for a carpet and dried fish over my head together with this motley group who surrounded me! But there was this sweet truth which gave beauty to all viz., Jesus was not near to bless us in our humble abode, just as much, I believe, as if we had the spire of some noble building over our heads.<sup>86</sup>

Like Peck, Richards viewed the church as primarily a gathering place, but also desired that churches develop into permanent spaces to solidify congregational, community-based worship.<sup>87</sup> But Richards believed this could be compatible with the native-agency policy, through the involvement of indigenous people in construction and the development of a vibrant and growing community through participation.

Neither the new church at Blacklead nor the new mission house at Herschel involved indigenous people in their construction, because of the nature of the buildings as prefabricated imports. Nevertheless, the development of the mission premises reflects on an approach similar to that discussed by Richards where the focus shifted from civilization to the growth of indigenous churches rooted in their own landscape. Buildings were spaces of cultural mediation and the development of the two High Arctic stations represented a change in how that cultural transfer was approached by changing its location outside of buildings designed to civilize.

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<sup>86</sup> Peck, [1878], in Lewis, *E.J. Peck*, 101-102.

<sup>87</sup> Richards, "Genesis," 36-37.

*Conclusion*

The attitudes of Peck and Stringer towards the use of indigenous architectural forms mark a major shift in evangelical thinking. Although reflecting policy discussions at home and practice elsewhere, it was not the norm in North America because of prevailing views on non-permanent indigenous architecture and civilization. Despite the fact that their usage was short and limited, indigenous architectural forms in these two missions are a break in the dialogue of Christianity and civilization and its manifestation through building.

The shift was certainly pragmatic. Using indigenous structures in the far north made sense and the development of agricultural mission was even less suitable there than in other northern missions. Although their building strategies shifted within a few years, these structures are disruptions in mission strategy, where missionaries did not expect that the Inuit would change how they lived. They did expect conversion to Christianity, itself a disruption in Inuit traditional life and belief, but this was performed initially through a space which represented and mediated the dissemination of Christianity into the Inuit world as opposed to the wholesale replacement of the environment with a European alternative. But Peck and Stringer's use of indigenous forms remained isolated. Their ideas were not adopted throughout North America, nor were they used in

subsequent Arctic missions in the 1910s and 1920s. The civilizing mandate continued and European architecture prevailed as a medium for change and an agent of mission.

## 8: Missions and the Klondike Gold Rush

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, missionaries approached the north as an untapped frontier unlikely to develop into lands for settlement, in stark contrast to the southern prairies. The territory seemed destined to remain as it had been for much of the century: a region inhabited by indigenous people, missionaries and traders. Nowhere was this truer than in the Yukon Territory, described by American novelist Jack London, who visited the Klondike in 1897, to be “a vast wilderness...as dark and chartless as Darkest Africa.”<sup>1</sup> Even in the early 1880s, there was little HBC or missionary activity there, specifically in the southern part of the territory, confined instead to the region around Peel River and Rampart House.

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<sup>1</sup> Jack London, “The Gold Hunters of the North,” in *Revolution and Other Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), 180.



But, by the mid-1890s, the entire region had been radically transformed as thousands of white settlers flocked into the territory in search of gold. With the discovery of gold at Fortymile Creek in 1886 and the subsequent, infamous Klondike strike in 1896, the Yukon suddenly shifted from indigenous to non-indigenous territory with the development of vast mining camps, railways and the city of Dawson, which was, by 1898, the largest Canadian centre west of Winnipeg.<sup>2</sup> Miners, remarked missionary Thomas Canham in an 1898 interview with the *Gleaner*: “were making it a white man’s country.”<sup>3</sup>

Missionaries were suddenly forced to respond to the new demographic reality. The CMS had already entered the southern Yukon at the time of the Fortymile strike and moved quickly to provide indigenous ministry. But the question remained as to what to do about the spiritual needs of the miners. New groups of missionaries, as well as the Oblates, arrived in the territory; the mission field was transformed. In order to serve these disparate populations, infrastructure needed to be developed to provide both worship space and charitable services. As the churches responded to the region’s changing demographic and social conditions, architecture also needed to respond to its unique conditions combining a wilderness frontier and a settlement explosion. Simultaneously, it needed to balance the disparate needs of indigenous mission and

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<sup>2</sup> Douglas Fetherling, *The Gold Crusades A Social History of the Gold Rushes, 1849-1929* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 134.

<sup>3</sup> Canham, “On the Klondyke,” *CMG* 25 (1898): 121.

white ministry where alternative goals shaped distinctive, but sometimes overlapping, strains of architecture to respond to what buildings could and should do within these communities.

### *Prospecting in the Yukon*

The Klondike Rush of 1896-99 and the wave of tens of thousands of eager gold seekers into the region is a well-known narrative in the territory's economic development, as are its radical impacts on the region's social makeup. But the strike was not an isolated event and drew on a larger history of prospecting in the region which had begun several decades earlier.

The Klondike strike was only made because people were looking for it.<sup>4</sup> Following the 1849 California gold rush, prospectors had made their way up the Pacific coast through British Columbia and the Alaskan panhandle, looking for the next major strike. By the early 1870s, a handful of prospectors had entered the Yukon River Basin. The HBC and, in fact, the CMS, already knew the gold was there as specimens had been noted both by

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<sup>4</sup> Coates and Morrison, *Midnight Sun*, 79.

HBC employees and by McDonald, but these finds were never publicized in an attempt to keep miners out.<sup>5</sup>

Prospecting continued throughout the 1870s and 1880s, attracting a small but growing number of miners as it became increasingly clear that gold was present on the river. The miners were an extremely transient population, moving as they searched and generally not overwintering the territory; most returned to the Alaskan coast when winter halted skim mining operations.<sup>6</sup> The only permanent sign of their presence were a few small resupply posts, associated primarily with the Alaska Commercial Company (ACCo) which allowed for systematic exploration of the Yukon by supplying camps; the largest of these posts, Fort Reliance (fig.8.1), operated between 1874 and 1886.<sup>7</sup> The miners also did not develop lasting relationship with indigenous people. Despite trade between Fort Reliance and the nearby Hän village of Nuklako, for example, it was informal and sporadic, with miners supplied primarily from the outside world.<sup>8</sup>

This changed with the discovery of gold on Fortymile River in 1886. The strike was substantial and gold was found in a number of the river's tributaries, attracting

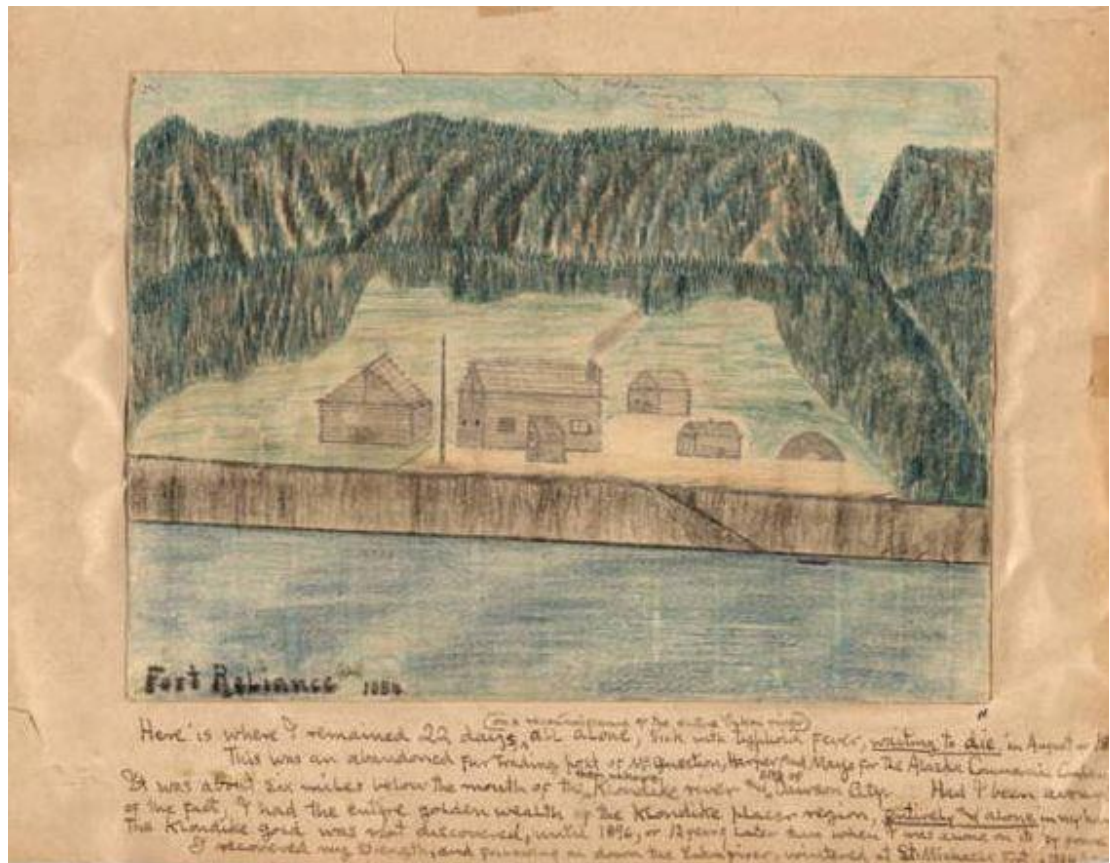
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<sup>5</sup> Michael James Brand, "Transience in Dawson City, Yukon, During the Klondike Gold Rush," (PhD Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2003), 38.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Gates, *Gold At Fortymile Creek: Early Days in the Yukon* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Berton, *Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush* (London: W.H. Allen, 1960), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Melody Webb, *Yukon: The Last Frontier* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1993), 61.



**8.1:** Fort Reliance, drawing by Dr. Willis E. Everette, c.1884. University of Alaska Archives, Fairbanks, 1976-9.6

prospectors from across the Yukon basin and from the outside world.<sup>9</sup> A number of temporary cabins were erected in the winter of 1886-87 but building began in earnest in summer 1887 with the erection of an ACCo trading post.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the next several years, it continued to grow as more miners were attracted to the region. At its peak in 1893, the town of Fortymile housed over 700 miners and covered approximately sixty acres (fig.8.2) with a range of independent businesses including the trading post,

<sup>9</sup> Coates and Morrison, *Midnight Sun*, 52.

<sup>10</sup> Gates, *Fortymile*, 40.



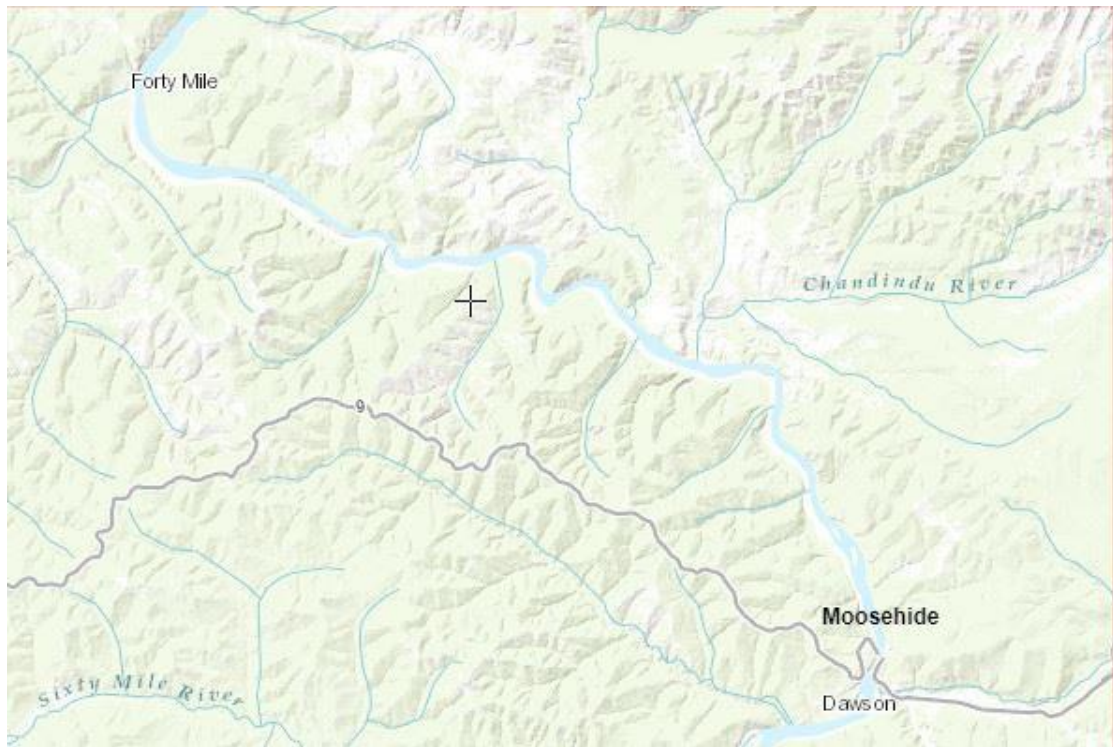
8.2:: View of Fortymile townsite. *Old Log Church Museum, 1996-1-132.*

saloons, blacksmiths and distilleries alongside log cabins erected by miners.<sup>11</sup> The Canadian government dispatched a NWMP contingent to the settlement in 1894 to keep law and order, erecting Fort Constantine on the bank of the river opposite the town site.<sup>12</sup> Fortymile was not a camp nor an HBC post, but rather a town with a diverse and growing population and no overall commercial control. Its development, unlike earlier mining efforts, stemmed from two key factors. The first was the size of the strike which allowed for sustained mining between 1886 and 1895 and drew in large number of miners not already in the territory. The second was the development of placer mining

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<sup>11</sup> Bompas to George Bompas, 29 January 1895, GSA-M89-3/A5.

<sup>12</sup> M.H.S. Hayne and H. West Taylor, *Pioneers of the Klondyke: Being an Account of Two Years Police Services on the Yukon* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1897), 46-47.



**8.3:** *The Klondike and Yukon River*

techniques that allowed for continuous mining throughout the winter by burning into the frozen ground.<sup>13</sup> Prior to this development, freezing temperatures made extraction impossible up to eight months of the year. With mining now a continuous business, the population grew and settled, with the new town developing to house and supply it (figure 8.3).

Mining operations profoundly impacted the local economy through the introduction of sustained mining. They also fundamentally affected indigenous communities and

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<sup>13</sup> H.A. Innis, *Settlement and the Mining Frontier* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1936), 180; William Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon and the Story of Its Gold Finds* (London: John Lane, 1913), 140.



**8.4:** "Rev. Dr. Sim Preaching to the Indians at Fort Reliance, Aug. 18 1883." *Alaska State Library*, P277-01723.

missionaries, who were forced to respond to the changing demographic conditions.

From their northerly bases, Bompas and McDonald had penetrated the territory in the 1860s.<sup>14</sup> The first major incursion, however, was not until the 1880s when Vincent Sim travelled to Fort Reliance as part of wider circuit that, in 1884, stretched from Fort Reliance to Nulato, Alaska.<sup>15</sup> Sim, who died from starvation at Rampart House in winter 1885, made it clear in his journals that his focus was primary indigenous evangelism. Although often coming in contact with the miners, it appears Sim did little for their

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<sup>14</sup> Cody, *Apostle*, 140-42.

<sup>15</sup> Sim Journal, 19 July 1884, OLCM.

welfare, occasionally holding services or baptising infants.<sup>16</sup> Both Sim and native catechist Herbert Tahitetyla visited Fort Reliance in 1884, but only as part of their mission to Nuklako (fig. 8.4), with white ministry remaining auxiliary to their work.<sup>17</sup>

As elsewhere, staffing levels made any evangelism beyond this almost impossible. While stations were consolidating elsewhere, the Upper Yukon was virtually unexplored.<sup>18</sup> In a plea for volunteers and donations, published posthumously, Sim wrote of a region still unknown by the CMS, noting: "Fort Selkirk, the Pelly River and the country above the headwaters of the Yukon have never yet been visited."<sup>19</sup> His plea was soon answered by T. Fowell Buxton, a prominent supporter of evangelical missions, who donated £100 for a renewed mission under Ellington.<sup>20</sup> With funds and a missionary now secure, Bompas, as bishop, looked to establish a mission with wide-ranging access to indigenous communities, choosing a site that was both convenient and problematic for their operations: Fortymile. Although it was not ideal, indigenous people travelled regularly to Fortymile to trade with the miners, although remaining outsiders in the mining community, and Bompas viewed it as a good point of contact.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Sim Journal, 4 May 1882; 13 June 1884, OLCM.

<sup>17</sup> Sim Journal, 9 July; 18 August 1884, OLCM.

<sup>18</sup> Sim Journal, 1 August 1884, OLCM.

<sup>19</sup> Sim, "Voice from an Arctic Grave," *CMI* 11(1886): 92.

<sup>20</sup> Cody, *Apostle*, 247.

<sup>21</sup> Coates, *Best Left*, 33-38; 79-80.



The growth of Fortymile and its proximity to the new Buxton mission, named after its benefactor, placed missionaries in a difficult position, but one they faced throughout the British Empire: how to conduct indigenous missions in close proximity to settlement.<sup>22</sup> This issue had not faced northern missions because of the territory's remoteness and required clear and defined strategies to navigate. The response at Fortymile drew both on wider CMS experience and Bompas' own philosophy, shaping the subsequent development of the CMS' Yukon mission.

One of the prevailing tropes of nineteenth-century missionary dialogue was the sinful white man, usually traders, miners and similar, whose immoral ways worked to corrupt innocent natives through the introduction of their vices, including alcohol and gambling.<sup>23</sup> Bompas certainly regarded miners in this light, firm in his conviction that they would lead indigenous people, who he saw as needing protection, to temptation. Generally, missionaries also regarded the HBC in this light, but internal company discipline, their small numbers and policies against trading alcohol in the north tempered this perceived influence. Bompas saw the miners as infinitely worse, stating his belief that:

...as civilized races intermingle with those barbarous rude, there are offered also large tastes of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and these are greedily devoured, and perhaps greatly preferred [to religion]. It is pitiful to see the comparative

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<sup>22</sup> Venn to Townsend, 4 February 1862, CMSA-C/A2/L3.

<sup>23</sup> Higham, *Redeemable*, 124.

simplicity of the savage imbibe the allurements of vicious pleasure which he learns from more civilized races.<sup>24</sup>

In light of this view, the mission's proximity to Fortymile was a distinctive drawback.<sup>25</sup> Bompas, as a result, adopted a specifically segregationist policy, keeping the communities separate through separate religious provisions.

Racial segregation in church development derived from Venn's native church policy and its advocacy of a separate indigenous church under indigenous leadership.<sup>26</sup> He believed that a robust indigenous church was impossible when it integrated large numbers of Europeans into both local congregations and leadership positions.<sup>27</sup> The great culprit in the amalgamation of indigenous and settlers churches to the detriment of the former was New Zealand under Bishop G.A. Selwyn, which was roundly condemned by the CMS for subsuming a strong Maori church into the settler one.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, by the 1890s, this policy had been replaced by one of assimilation, under the leadership of Eugene Stock who argued that, where indigenous Christians were in the minority, they should "become absorbed into a Church the bulk of whose members are of British descent."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bompas in *Apostle*, 375.

<sup>25</sup> Selina Bompas, *Heroine*, 132.

<sup>26</sup> C. Peter Williams, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church: A Study in Victorian Missionary Strategy* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 42-43.

<sup>27</sup> Venn to G.L. Cotton, 6 December 1864, CMSA-C/I1/L6; Peter Williams, "The Church Missionary Society and the Indigenous Church in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century: Defence and Destruction of the Venn Ideals," in *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914*, ed. Dana L. Robert (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2008), 86-87.

<sup>28</sup> Davidson, "Culture and Ecclesiology," 214-15.

<sup>29</sup> Stock, *History*, 2:84.

Bompas strongly opposed indigenous leadership, but explicitly wrote of his support for Venn's advocacy of racial churches.<sup>30</sup> Bompas' approach derived from his desire for "the preservation of the Indians"<sup>31</sup> because he subscribed to the widely-held belief that, without intervention, indigenous communities under onslaught from white settlement would die off.<sup>32</sup> He also believed that "the influence of the miners is unfavourable"<sup>33</sup> from a spiritual and moral perspective, hindering his mission and exerting bad influences on indigenous people, thus depriving them of salvation and worsening their temporal conditions through, for example, the introduction of liquor.<sup>34</sup>

He was also aware that, as a bishop, he needed to provide for the spiritual welfare of two communities, but, nevertheless, saw indigenous evangelism as "the exclusive sphere of the CMS."<sup>35</sup> Working amongst the miners, he believed, was fundamentally contrary to CMS mandate, and the CMS agreed.<sup>36</sup> Not only contrary to the CMS' mandate, it was also financially unfeasible and separation of the two populations allowed for the development of funding structures drawing on sources of revenue previously unavailable, including the SPG and Canadian and Colonial Church Society (CCCS).<sup>37</sup> In addition, Bompas, who both ran the diocese and took over from Ellington at

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<sup>30</sup> Bompas to CMS, [1900], CMSA-G1/C1/O/1901/13.

<sup>31</sup> Bompas to [Thomas Daly], 5 June 1894, LAC-RG10.3906.105378.

<sup>32</sup> Higham, *Redeemable*, 20; Coates, *Best Left*, 165.

<sup>33</sup> Bompas to CMS, 20 January 189, CMI 18 (1893): 700

<sup>34</sup> Bompas, *Mackenzie River*, 102.

<sup>35</sup> Bompas to CMS, 3 May 1898, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1893/182.

<sup>36</sup> Bompas to CMS, 15 June 1896, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1896/157; Stock, *History*, 2:84.

<sup>37</sup> CMS, *Annual Report* (1897): 417.



**8.5:** Buxton Mission, Fortymile, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7561-34.*

The school-chapel appears on the left and the mission house on the right.

Buxton in 1892, was uninterested in white ministry, a preference well-known amongst his staff.<sup>38</sup> After working amongst indigenous people for thirty years, Bompas wrote that he felt like “a foreigner among the whites”<sup>39</sup> and went to great lengths to work exclusively amongst indigenous communities. Combining personal preference and professional policy, Bompas was adamant that religious provisions for the two

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<sup>38</sup> R.J. Bowen, “Incidents in the Life of R.J. Bowen,” LAC-MG29.C92, 84; James Naylor to his parents, 15 April 1898, GSA-M75-10/1.

<sup>39</sup> Bompas to [Henry] Bompas, 29 March 1898, GSA-M89-3/A5.

communities remain separate, something which profoundly impacted their subsequent development.

The experiment in segregation was first put in place at Fortymile and resulted in the erection of two separate Anglican missions on the same town site. Initially, both populations were served, separately, in the same buildings. With assistance from indigenous Christians, Ellington erected a mission house in 1890; initially on the mainland, it was moved to an island in the river around 1891 to temper the influence of the town. A combination school-chapel was erected on the island between 1892 and 1893 under the direction of the Bompases (fig. 8.5).<sup>40</sup> Ellington initially intended for the mission to be composed of the three separate structures – church, school and house – which defined most northern missions. He also planted a garden and encouraged indigenous converts to do the same.<sup>41</sup> After their erection on the island, the buildings served much as their counterparts throughout the north.

Nevertheless, the desire remained to completely separate the two missions whose needs were seen as very different. Consistent with the rest of the northern field, indigenous people were viewed as child-like innocents who needed to learn about Christ and whose sinfulness arose from ignorance and their surroundings; the miners,

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<sup>40</sup> Selina Bompas, 1892, *Heroine*, 135; Haynes and West, *Pioneers*, 68.

<sup>41</sup> Ellington to Kirkby, 1 July 1890, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1893/152; Ellington, “Buxton Mission,” *The Georgian*, 1888 CMSA-G1/C1/O/1889/6.



8.6: R.J. Bowen, St. James' Anglican Church, Fortymile, 1896. Author's *photograph*

meanwhile, were nominally Christians but ministry was needed for their spiritual improvement and return to grace. As a result, separate missions and buildings were required. Bompas assigned R.J. Bowen, a CMS missionary who arrived in 1895, to work exclusively with the miners; as a result, his connection to the CMS was severed and he was placed under the umbrella of the CCCS, signalling the beginning of a distinctive non-indigenous ministry.<sup>42</sup>

Bowen's first church was a log cabin rented from a local merchant and converted to serve as a dwelling and worship space. Many miners showed interest in his services and

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<sup>42</sup> Bowen, "Incidents," 132-33.





**8.7:** Service Room, Fortymile, c.1897. Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7518-75

it was soon too small to accommodate them.<sup>43</sup> Bowen began a new structure in 1896, completed by his successor, Canadian missionary H.A. Naylor, after Bowen was transferred to the nearby strike and settlement at Circle City, Alaska. Completed that year, it was much like its predecessor, a log cabin divided to serve as a house and church (fig. 8.6). An 1897 drawing of the service room (fig.8.7) shows its basic interior arrangement.

<sup>43</sup> Gates, *Fortymile*, 99.

The CMS, however, was no longer alone. In 1895, Father William Judge, an American Jesuit in Alaska, was sent to work amongst the miners. He purchased a log cabin as dwelling and chapel, and held services there for Catholic miners.<sup>44</sup> Judge visited some indigenous encampments but did little towards evangelization which remained the preserve of the CMS. But Judge presented the first denominational challenge to the CMS in the Yukon, a forerunner of things to come.

In 1895, Bompas wrote to his brother in England of the future of the territory, stating: “I think after a few years, this District will become quite a civilized and prosperous place.”<sup>45</sup> But, in 1895, Fortymile remained the frontier of both European penetration and missionary activity. Unlike southern settlements, the miners who came to Fortymile were fundamentally transient, with the full intention of leaving when they struck it rich or when the next big strike was made elsewhere.<sup>46</sup> There was no attempt to transform the landscape beyond the immediate goal of resource extraction. Despite arable soil which yielded successful, if limited, kitchen gardens, agricultural transformation had limited potential because, in the words of Canadian government surveyor William

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<sup>44</sup> Gates, *Fortymile*, 97; William Judge to unknown, 9 February 1896, Charles Joseph Judge, *An American Missionary: A Record of the Work of Rev. William H. Judge, S.J.* (Ossining NY: Catholic Foreign Mission Society, 1907), 164.

<sup>45</sup> Bompas to George Bompas, 4 January 1895, GSA-M89-3/A5.

<sup>46</sup> Gates, *Fortymile*, 49; Innis, *Mining Frontier*, 176.



Ogilvie, of “unsuitable climactic conditions.”<sup>47</sup> The miners were not settlers, but rather products of a frontier society with no intention of changing the land.<sup>48</sup> Fortymile was the lone European centre in an indigenous landscape, a temporary base for resource extraction. While its growth fundamentally changed how missionaries operated by forcing them to grapple with white ministry, indigenous evangelism remained effectively the same as it had throughout the north: the attempted introduction of Christianity and civilization in a vast and seemingly untameable wilderness.

### *Dawson City*

However, everything radically changed with the Klondike strike in 1896, which brought a huge influx of non-indigenous people into the Yukon and radically changed the permanence and function of settlement in the territory.<sup>49</sup> Bringing thousands of eager gold-seekers into the Yukon between 1896 and 1899, the population explosion resulted in the growth of Dawson City, at the site of the new strike, as well as the near-abandonment of Fortymile. The rush caused a massive upheaval in the territory’s

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<sup>47</sup> William Ogilvie, *The Klondike Official Guide: Canada’s Great Gold Field, the Yukon District* (Toronto: The Hunter Rose Co., 1898), 56.

<sup>48</sup> Fetherling, *Gold Crusades*, 124; Morrison, *True North*, 78-79; Paul, *Mining Frontier*, 1.

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of its wider context and scholarship, see: Ken Coates, “The Klondike Gold Rush in World History: Putting the Stampede in Perspective,” *The Northern Review* 19, no. 1 (1998): 29.

economic and social structure, pushing aside indigenous people in favour of white settlement, forcing missionaries to adapt to the new reality of their mission field.

Dawson's development was rapid and carried out on a scale unseen in the north. Beginning as a conglomeration of cabins and tents on a rough town site laid out on the site of the Hän fishing camp near the mouth of the Klondike River, the massive influx of gold-seekers swelled the site to a town of 30 000 people by 1898.<sup>50</sup> By 1899, the realization that most of the paying claims were already staked and the news of the strike in Nome, Alaska began the exodus from the town and the population dropped to 10 000 by 1902. Although Dawson continued to gradually shrink throughout the early twentieth century, there was now a city in the Yukon.<sup>51</sup>

The change in Dawson was its development as a major economic centre intended as a permanent settlement. Although the initial population was fluid and transient, the sheer number of people who poured into the territory necessarily led to the development of businesses and administrative structures not seen elsewhere, transforming the town from a frontier outpost to a permanent centre. Businesses were initially established in the early, frenzied days of the rush to serve the booming community; despite the decline after 1899, local businesses continued to grow and prosper. One of the primary

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<sup>50</sup> Charlene Porsild, *Gamblers and Dreamers: Women, Men and Community in the Klondike* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 8; Rose Helper, "The Yukon Gold Rush: A Study in Social Disorganization and Reorganization," (MA Thesis, University of Toronto, 1945), 40.

<sup>51</sup> Porsild, *Gamblers*, 191.



**8.8:** Tent City, Dawson, 1898. Dawson City Museum, 1962.6.4

commercial areas was the service sector, but businesses also developed out of the mining industry, particularly as placer mining gave way to industrial dredging, creating a strong upper and middle class of successful business people permanently located in the community. Furthermore, the influx in outsiders, particularly Americans, had pushed the Canadian government to dispatch the NWMP to the town to maintain law and order, and also a raft of civil servants, including a separate territorial administration and judiciary, to manage the region's affairs.<sup>52</sup> The arrival of police officers and civil servants

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<sup>52</sup> Fetherling, *Gold Crusades*, 155.



8.9: Dawson, 1900. *Dawson City Museum*, 1984.143.2

set a tone of order, stability and Canadian sovereignty in contrast to both the fluid population of Fortymile and the insular world of the HBC post.<sup>53</sup> Alongside individuals such as doctors who began to arrive in the settlement by the late 1890s, they also created a professional middle class with expectations above frontier living. By the end of the century, Dawson had evolved into a stratified, late-Victorian society much like any other centre in southern and eastern Canada.<sup>54</sup> In 1907, a reporter for the *Alaska-Yukon Magazine* reported: “There is about Dawson an undefinable [*sic*] atmosphere which one

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<sup>53</sup> Morrison, “Policing the Boom Town,” 85-86.

<sup>54</sup> Porsild, *Gambers*, 15-20.



**8.10:** Presbyterian Manse, n.d. *Author's photo*

*This is an extremely rare example of the Second Empire style in northern Canada, which was very popular in southern Canada, particularly Ontario, in the late nineteenth century.*

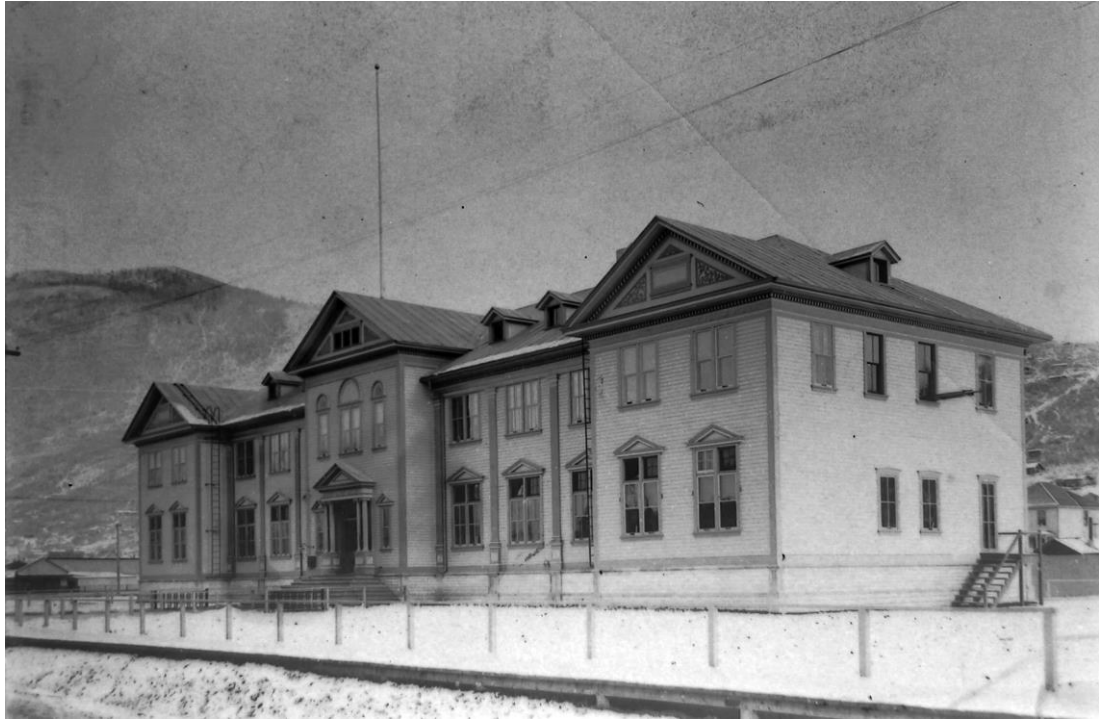
never expects to find in a mining camp, but associated with older cities where progress, educational institutions, culture and refinement are expected to be found.”<sup>55</sup>

Dawson’s unique social conditions were reflected in its architecture. Initial structures, tents and log cabins, were makeshift (fig.8.8), but soon gave way to more permanent, solid structures for homes, businesses and services.<sup>56</sup> Initially, businesses were heavily associated with entertainment, including dancehalls and saloons, but these soon gave way to a more diverse range of businesses increasingly catering to the growing upper

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<sup>55</sup> “Prominent Industrial Centres in Yukon Territory and Alaska – Dawson,” *Alaska-Yukon Magazine* 3 (1907): 24.

<sup>56</sup> Helper, “Gold Rush,” 54-55.



**8.11:** Territorial Administration Building, Dawson, c.1902. *Dawson City Museum, 1962.2.6*

and middle classes. The shift is particularly evident in domestic structures where, by 1898, tents had given way to framed timber houses (fig. 8.9). Business people and professionals also wanted fashionable houses to reflect their social standing and domestic architecture evolved to accommodate this desire through the integration of contemporary trends into the town's streetscape (fig.8.10). The new administrative buildings, similarly, reflected the town's evolution; the new Territorial Administrative Building (fig. 8.11), for example, erected in 1901 and designed by Canadian architect Thomas W. Fuller, presents an air of order and sophistication in its Classical facade. By the turn of the century, Dawson was not a frontier town; this was a town with running water and electricity, with a federal administration and strong business community, far

removed from Fortymile despite its geographic proximity, and even further from northern HBC posts, reflecting the changing social and cultural dynamic of gold rush society.<sup>57</sup>

The development of this new community impacted the way in which the churches operated, especially the CMS. With the growth of the territory's non-indigenous population, indigenous communities were often pushed aside because, although they participated as marginal outsiders in the gold rush economy, the mining community was not interested in forging economic and social ties, as the HBC had. Indigenous people were generally viewed as a hindrance to mining activities; for example, the Hän camp at the mouth of the Klondike River was removed to make way for the town of Dawson because it was a good location for settlement.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the federal government was also not interested in engaging or treaty-making with them. For the CMS, this meant that the racial split in religious provisions encouraged by Bompas at Fortymile was naturally enforced by the economic separation of the two communities.

The other major impact was the entry of other denominational groups into the Yukon to serve the non-indigenous population, primarily at Dawson, as well as on the route into the goldfields, at emerging settlements in Skagway, Lake Bennett and Whitehorse.

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<sup>57</sup> Coates, "World History," 27; DIA, "History," *Dawson City Conservation Study*, 25-26; Fetherling, *Gold Crusades*, 152.

<sup>58</sup> *Proceedings* (1898) : 427; Porsild, *Gamblers*, 49.

Judge, for example, followed the exodus from Fortymile to Dawson to minister to its Catholic population; he was replaced by the Oblates after his death in 1898.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, Presbyterian ministers arrived with the first wave of miners from outside the territory in 1897 and were followed by other Protestant denominations, including the Methodists and Salvation Army, all focused on the miners.<sup>60</sup> Unlike the dichotomous competition between Anglicans and Catholics in the indigenous mission field to the north and east, the concentration of diverse denominations in a concentrated geographic area negated issues of claiming territory and changed the ways churches operated, shifting the focus to a parish-based model. This work, it should be noted, was still regarded as apostolic, not because missionaries were converting non-Christians, but rather because of the difficulty in travel into and around the territory and the work of establishing new congregations.<sup>61</sup> Miners, like indigenous people, were seen as in need of salvation, and missionaries saw themselves in an amoral country, but that immorality came from the search for material gain, not the inherent sinfulness of the natural world.

With this understanding of the new non-indigenous population to whom they were ministering, missionaries from all denominations took steps to establish Dawson as the primary locus of services, both spiritual and temporal. From Dawson, they could service outlying camps, including the men who remained for long periods on the gold-bearing

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<sup>59</sup> "Rapport de vicariate d'Athabaska-Mackenzie," *Missions* 36 (1898): 189.

<sup>60</sup> Porsild, *Gamblers*, 22.

<sup>61</sup> "Klondyke," *Missions* 37 (1899): 248.



creeks, but most of their work was in the town. Its large population provided ample people to save, tempering denominational rivalry as each church established their own community.

This alternative focus manifested itself in architecture. Although similar visually and in regards to construction as their missionary counterparts, their function and demographic shifted their role in the community away from the insular environment of the mission station and integrated them into the wider non-indigenous community. Like in indigenous mission, church organizations in the Klondike erected structures for both worship spaces and charitable services, such as hospitals, to serve the wide-reaching mandate of the nineteenth-century churches.

Churches were usually the priority for construction. Unlike indigenous mission, the mission house was not viewed with the same importance, although ministers did need somewhere to live. The focus on the spiritual salvation of nominal Christians tempted by material gain deemphasized missionary focus on the transformation of the non-Christian family and this showed in their architectural projects. As a result, religious groups were quick to erect churches to hold services and bring people back to God.

Early structures were rudimentary, either tents or log cabins intended to get people in seats while raising funds for a more permanent structure. The first church on-site was



**8.12:** Father Judge and church-tent structure. *Old Log Church Museum, 1992-13-2*

Anglican, erected by Canadian missionary Frederick Flewelling in autumn 1869 and later removed by Bowen to a site reserved in the town plan for it.<sup>62</sup> It served as both mission house and church, much like its predecessors across the CMS' northern missions.<sup>63</sup>

Tents were the other temporary alternative, but they were not used as in wide-ranging itineracy, but rather as temporary accommodation in a fixed location. Judge had used tents previously in Alaska and he continued this arrangement at Dawson, erecting two

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<sup>62</sup> Zaslow, *Canadian North*, 128.

<sup>63</sup> Bowen, "Incidents," 169-70; 184.



**8.13:** Church of England tent, 1898. *Royal British Columbia Museum Archives, 19800-010*

tents when he arrived in 1897 to serve as house and chapel respectively (fig. 8.12).<sup>64</sup> The Presbyterians also held their first services in Dawson in a large tent.<sup>65</sup> Tents were often used in outlying camps (fig. 8.13) and other communities, including by Bowen at Whitehorse in 1900 (fig. 8.14) to provide cheap space for smaller congregations; in these locations, they often served in a more-permanent capacity because timber buildings were expensive to erect and the longevity of outlying camps was not assured.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Judge to his brother, 3 August 189, in *American Missionary*, 85; Judge to his brother, 27 December 1897, in *American Missionary*, 178-80.

<sup>65</sup> Mary E. Hitchcock, *Two Women in the Klondike (1899)*, (reprint, Anchorage: University of Alaska Press, 2005), 73.

<sup>66</sup> Gendreau to Augier, 18 April 1900, *Mission* 38 (1900): 235; Naylor to his parents, 13 November 1900, GSA-M75-10/1.



**8.14:** Tent Church, Whitehorse, c.1900. *Old Log Church Museum, 1996-1-105*

As a worship space, the tent reinforced the apostolic view of the church as establishing congregations on a new frontier; Grouard, who, as Vicar Apostolic of Mackenzie, visited the goldfields in 1900, remarked: “the tabernacle of the Hebrews in the desert is what suits the best,”<sup>67</sup> especially in the creeks. But the understood permanence of the new congregations, particularly at Dawson, and the need to provide more appropriate worship spaces made the erection of permanent, timber buildings important and it occurred very quickly. Bowen erected the new Anglican church in Dawson in 1897-98

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<sup>67</sup> Grouard, “Vicariate du Mackenzie,” *Missions* 39 (1901): 139. “Le tabernacle des Hébreux dans le désert est donc ce qui convient le mieux.”



**8.15:** R.J. Bowen, Old St. Paul's Anglican Church, Dawson, 1897-98. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7518-77*

(fig. 8.15) and a similar one at Whitehorse in 1900 (fig.8.16), both log structures but dedicated worship space with details to denote their function, such as the belfry in Dawson. Similar structures were erected by the Presbyterian, Catholic and Methodist congregations as they established a more permanent footing. Aesthetically, they differed little from their missionary counterparts. But the speed with which they were erected speaks to the conditions of the community and their priorities.

However, the growth of Dawson as an important economic and administrative centre demanded the erection of structures which reflected the growing sophistication of a community rapidly shedding its frontier identity. This shift began in 1898 when the newly-built Catholic church (fig.8.16) burnt down and was replaced by a new building



**8.16:** R.J. Bowen, Christ Church, Whitehorse, 1900. *Author's photo*

(fig. 8.18) funded by miner Alexander MacDonald which, in Judge's words, "would do credit to a much older town."<sup>68</sup> The move towards more fashionable styles (fig. 8.19) and funding from the local congregation signals the shift away from the mission model. Similarly, the Presbyterians erected a new Gothic building in 1901 (fig.8.20), as part of Dawson's wider shift from boom town to respectable community.<sup>69</sup>

This shift is nowhere more evident than in the Anglican Church, the denomination which underwent the most significant changes in its tenure in the Yukon. Designed and erected in 1902 by Fuller, the church, St. Paul's (fig.8.21), is a Carpenter Gothic structure with a

<sup>68</sup> Judge to unknown, 6 October 1898, in *American Missionary*, 239.

<sup>69</sup> *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Canada*, 1901, 4.





**8.17:** Original St. Mary's Catholic Church, Dawson, 1897. *Dawson City Museum, 1996.36.24, courtesy of Archives Deschâtelets-NDC, fonds Deschâtelets*  
The Catholic hospital erected by Judge is to the left of the church.



**8.18:** St. Mary's Catholic Church, Dawson, 1901. *Yukon Archives*, 4715 2319

frontal tower; the Gothic character is integrated into the building and its furnishings for an overall appearance consistent with late Victorian Canadian ecclesiastical design (fig. 8.22). Although the CMS also used the Gothic style, St. Paul's is a different type of structure, constructed to serve a non-indigenous community interested in taste and respectability, "a structure that would do credit to any city."<sup>70</sup> It was not a missionary

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<sup>70</sup> George H. Locke to Naylor, 8 July 1904, GSA-M75-10/3.





**8.19:** Interior of St. Mary's Church, Dawson, c.1910. *Dawson City Museum*, 1984.147.1

building, rather reflecting the dominant British-Canadian sensibilities of its congregation and the town itself.<sup>71</sup>

The shift is also reflected in the church-building process. While the majority of church projects in the mission field were missionary-driven and designed, St. Paul's and its contemporaries were driven by their congregations, with building committees and

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<sup>71</sup> Thomas A. Rickard, *Through Yukon and Alaska* (San Francisco: Mining and Scientific Press, 1909), 188; Magrill, *Commerce*, 9.



**8.20:** W.P. Skilling, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Dawson, 1901. *Author's photo*

professional architects.<sup>72</sup> Control over the design process ensured that the building was oriented towards the congregation's sensibilities, not the evangelical focus of the CMS. Bompas wrote of his concerns around this issue at St. Paul's, as he was concerned that the congregation's plan, which included the use of elements such as figurative stained glass, were too High Church-oriented and not in the spirit of the Reformation, as he saw it; he also recognized there was nothing he could do about it.<sup>73</sup> The shift in control of the design process solidified the role of the church as a building and organization in relation to its congregation, changing its function from the imposition of Euro-Canadian culture

<sup>72</sup> "Specifications for St. Paul's Church," YA-COR56-File 7. The Presbyterian church, St. Andrew's, was also designed by a professional architect, American W.P. Skillings.

<sup>73</sup> Bompas to CMS, 21 February 1901, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1901/47; Bompas to Naylor, 15 February 1901 and 21 February 1901, GSA-M75-10/2.



8.21: Thomas W. Fuller, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Dawson City, Yukon, 1902. *Author's photo*





8.22: St. Paul's Anglican Church, Dawson, interior. *Author's photo*

and religion onto indigenous communities to a congregation's transplantation of material and spiritual culture as part of building a new community at the edge of the Canadian world.<sup>74</sup>

Like their missionary counterparts, church organizations in Dawson also provided charitable services, but their focus was on medicine, not education. Unlike in the rest of the north, schooling was quickly moved out of the hands of the churches because, as Bowen wrote after the closure of a small day school he had run out of the church: "The

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<sup>74</sup> Ian Lochhead, "Remembering the Middle Ages: Responses to the Gothic Revival in Colonial New Zealand," in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict Migration and Convergence*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 2009), 536-40.



**8.23:** Federal Day School, Dawson, c.1901. *Dawson City Museum*, 1962.7.76

growth of Dawson was so rapid that it seemed a hopeless task to cope with the work of building, teaching school and all other parochial duties pressing for organization and attention.”<sup>75</sup> A number of private schools run by teachers who had come north as part of the rush opened rapidly alongside a Catholic school opened in 1899 by the Sisters of Ste. Anne, a Québec order of nuns who joined Judge in 1898.<sup>76</sup> These were all superseded, however, in 1900 by the opening of a federal day school (fig.8.23), centralizing education outside of the churches.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Northern Lights on the Bible*, (1941): 4.

<sup>76</sup> Craig, *Glimpses of Sunshine*, 98; Gendreau to Angier, 18 April 1900, 235; Almstrom, “Schooling,” 80.

<sup>77</sup> *Klondike Nugget*, 28 September 1898; Almstrom, “Schooling,” 82.



**8.24:** “Original Good Samaritan Hospital”, c.1899. *Dawson City Museum, 1994.259.27*

Hospitals, however, were more closely associated with the churches, at least initially. Judge erected the first hospital in Dawson in August 1897 (see fig. 8.17), aware that medical facilities were urgently needed.<sup>78</sup> The Sisters came north explicitly to staff it.<sup>79</sup> However, Judge desired the entire community to use the hospital and it was endorsed by Catholic and non-Catholic, due to the serious need for this kind of facility. But, despite its Catholic roots, the hospital was transferred to medical professionals within two years, although the nuns and the Oblates, after Judge’s death, retained an administrative role; medicine, like education, moved into the professional sphere.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Charles Judge, *American Missionary*, 202.

<sup>79</sup> “Klondyke,” *Missions* 37 (1899): 233.

<sup>80</sup> Porsild, *Gamblers*, 45-46.

Likewise, a non-denominational Protestant hospital opened in 1899 (fig.8.24), run by the Presbyterian Church, but soon it too was handed over to medical professionals to provide more effective care.<sup>81</sup>

### *Indigenous Missions in the Southern Yukon*

Meanwhile, the CMS continued its indigenous missions. The ever-growing numbers of non-indigenous people in the territory made it clear to Bompas that the CMS' indigenous mission needed to expand and he began to push for growth in the southern Yukon.<sup>82</sup> By the end of the century, the CMS had established three new stations at Moosehide, Fort Selkirk and Carcross. Although focussed on indigenous evangelism, they nevertheless faced the same issues as their counterpart at Fortymile, but on a much smaller scale, as the influx of settlement continued.

The oldest of these, Fort Selkirk, was established by Canham where the ACCo had erected a fort; the Northern Tutchone had also long used the site as a fishing camp and it was an ideal location for a mission.<sup>83</sup> At the new mission, Canham built a combination school-chapel in 1892 (fig. 8.25) and rectory the following year (fig. 8.26). A church (fig.8.27) was not erected until 1931; Canham had planned to build a church as early as

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<sup>81</sup> Bowen, "Incidents," 187.

<sup>82</sup> Bompas to CMS, 14 August 1896, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1896/164B.

<sup>83</sup> *CMS Annual Report*, 1894, 249; Webb, *Yukon*, 16.



**8.25:** Fort Selkirk School-Chapel, 1892. *Author's photo*



**8.26:** Fort Selkirk Rectory, 1893. *Author's photo*





**8.27:** St. Andrew's Anglican Church, 1931. *Author's photo*

1898, but delayed, believing correctly that the government intended to move local indigenous people to a reserve and was unwilling to build a church for a congregation which might be relocated.<sup>84</sup> As elsewhere, Canham's attempts at agriculture resulted in a reasonably successful kitchen garden but the Northern Tutchone continued to engage in their traditional economy with Fort Selkirk as a stopping place for the mission and trade.<sup>85</sup>

In this way, Fort Selkirk operated much as other northern mission, serving as a central mission for evangelism south of the Pelly River.<sup>86</sup> The buildings also functioned much as elsewhere to introduce Christianity and its associated moral and cultural norms to indigenous people, who chose to integrate some, but not all, into their own lives. However, Fort Selkirk had a significant non-indigenous population to whom Canham also ministered. Throughout most of the 1890s, the post served as a supply depot and the non-indigenous population was consistently present, but transitory.<sup>87</sup> This changed slightly in 1898, with the arrival of the Yukon Field Force, a Canadian army detachment stationed there to provide backup for the NWMP and to assert Canadian sovereignty throughout the Yukon.<sup>88</sup> Canham, therefore, was required to devote more of his time to non-indigenous ministry; that a Catholic church (fig.8.28) was also constructed by the

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<sup>84</sup> Bompas to CMS, 4 February 1902, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1902/71.

<sup>85</sup> Canham, "On the Klondyke," 120.

<sup>86</sup> *CMS Annual Report*, 1900, 481.

<sup>87</sup> Porsild, *Gamblers*, 44.

<sup>88</sup> Brereton Greenhous, *Guarding the Goldfields: The Story of the Yukon Field Force* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1987), 20-21.



8.28: St. Francis-Xavier Catholic Church, 1898. *Author's photo*

Oblates in 1898 to serve incoming Catholics, but not for evangelization amongst indigenous people, speaks to the demographic shift occurring in the territory.<sup>89</sup> But Canham's mission remained associated with the CMS, with no segregation and no differentiation between the two congregations.

The station established at Carcross in 1900 functioned in much the same way. Bompas had moved there to build a mission "wholly devoted to the CMS and Indian interests"<sup>90</sup> in "the centre of a hitherto unoccupied area"<sup>91</sup>, but Carcross was the main entry point into the Yukon in Canada, having been reached by the White Pass and Yukon Railway in 1899.<sup>92</sup> It possessed a railway station, NWMP post, hotel and a number of small cabins, but, like Fort Selkirk, most of the non-indigenous population only passed through on their way to the goldfields, allowing Bompas to focus on indigenous people, but also not allowing for the segregation he desired.

Carcross' mission architecture reflects its unique conditions, particularly as only the church, built in 1904, was purpose-built. The mission house (fig.8.28) and school were both purchased from non-indigenous people who had arrived before Bompas established the mission; the former was an old roadhouse and the latter a NWMP

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<sup>89</sup> Gendreau to Angier, 5 October 1898, *Missions* 37 (1899): 121.

<sup>90</sup> Bompas to CMS, 6 December 1901, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1901/151.

<sup>91</sup> Bompas to CMS, 5 September 1900, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1900/116.

<sup>92</sup> Bompas to Selina Bompas, 14 June 1896, GSA-M89-3/A2; Coates and Morrison, *Midnight Sun*, 116-17.





**8.29:** Carcross Mission House. *Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives, P7517-232*

barracks.<sup>93</sup> This was a major break from CMS practice where achieving separation from other non-indigenous people was achieved through building, but it was also consistent with the conditions of the station and the fluidity of building usage in the Yukon at this time. The church also responds to the same conditions. Erected only four years after the establishment of the mission, and funded primarily by the Dominion Women's Auxiliary in Toronto, the rapid erection of a recognizable and clearly Gothic structure (fig.8.30) fit with the need to build a space that symbolized both the new religious practices of the missionaries to indigenous people and familiar Christianity to non-indigenous

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<sup>93</sup> Selina Bompas to unknown, 8 May 1901, *Heroine*, 17-73; Cody, *Apostle*, 305 A.H. Sovereign, *In Journeyings Often: Glimpses in the Life of Bishop Bompas* (Toronto: Church of England in Canada, 1916), 18.



8.30: St. Saviour's Church, Carcross. *Author's photo*

newcomers. But Bompas' focus remained on indigenous ministry, solidified with the removal of the Diocesan school to Carcross from Fortymile in 1903 and the subsequent erection of the federal residential school there in 1911.<sup>94</sup>

At Moosehide, however, the CMS was able to put into action Bompas' earlier desires for segregated communities, not through the church's doing, but rather due to the racist attitudes of the incoming miners and administration.<sup>95</sup> With the growth of Dawson, the Hän, whose camp occupied the site, were pushed to "relinquish any claim...on the site of the old Indian village of Klondak"<sup>96</sup> and removed to "the nearest plot of undisputed ground"<sup>97</sup>, a 160-acre reserve located about five kilometres downstream from Dawson.<sup>98</sup> Here Flewelling established a new mission, initially consisting of a single building to serve all of the mission's functions.<sup>99</sup> This building, which was both structurally questionable and too small, is very similar to other early mission buildings in descriptions of it and functionally fit within the pattern of CMS mission development throughout the north, in contrast to the Anglican developments at Dawson.<sup>100</sup> But, perhaps due to the publicity received by the mission on account of the gold rush, significant block grants were received by Moosehide from both the CMS and Society

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<sup>94</sup> Archer, *Heroine*, 179; Coates, "Day Schools," 137.

<sup>95</sup> Porsild, *Gamblers*, 52.

<sup>96</sup> J.A. Smart to Bompas, 12 August 1897, YA-COR6/6.

<sup>97</sup> Flewelling in *CMS Annual Report*, 1898, 427.

<sup>98</sup> Bowen, "Incidents," 169.

<sup>99</sup> "North-West Canada Mission," *CMI* 23 (1898): 465.

<sup>100</sup> Totty to Turner-Smith, 21 February 1900, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1900/33; Bompas to CMS, 4 May 1898, CMSA-G1/C1/O/1898/130.

for Promoting Christian Knowledge, allowing for the erection of a church in 1898 and school in 1899, completing the mission station's initial architectural growth only two years after it was established.<sup>101</sup>

Although indigenous people were faced by racist attitudes, the CMS saw the separate development of Moosehide as a segregated mission in a positive light. Bowen glossed over racial issues when writing about it, stating rather that: "The change in the Indians' location was made to keep them from being in immediate contact with white people and to protect them as far as possible from temptations."<sup>102</sup> Although both inaccurate and paternalistic, Bowen's attitude is a reflection of the CMS' desires in the diocese for segregated ministry to develop morally-pure indigenous Christian communities.

However, proximity to Dawson had some unintended consequences. Although only participating marginally in the mining industry, members of the Moosehide community took full economic advantage of Dawson as a place for trade and service provision, and the congregation quickly became semi-self-supporting, in line with the CMS' ultimate goals for its missions.<sup>103</sup> The outcome of this, architecturally, was the erection of a large Gothic church at Moosehide in 1908 (fig.8.31). A testament to the growth of self-supporting missions consistent with the CMS' mandate, the church was mostly paid for

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<sup>101</sup> Bompas to George Bompas, 28 May 1897, GSA-89-3/1.

<sup>102</sup> Bowen, "Incidents," 170.

<sup>103</sup> George Edward Gartrell, "The Work of the Churches in the Yukon During the Era of the Klondike Gold Rush," (MA Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1970), 87; *CMS Annual Report*, 1899, 437.





8.31: St. Barnabas' Church, Moosehide, 1908. *Author's photo*

by the Moosehide community who contributed £400 towards its erection.<sup>104</sup> Stylistically in sync with its counterpart in Dawson, the church was the result of unique missionary conditions and the fulfilment of the CMS' early policies on segregation, where the desire to protect people was difficult to enact, but also outweighed any long-term consequences of indigenous people's alienation from their traditional territory and the developing local economy, only a few kilometres away.

### *Conclusion*

Bowen once described Fortymile as "the most remote and isolated station in the British Empire"<sup>105</sup> but, by the turn of the century, this was no longer true. Although the northern part of the continent had long been painted as a missionary frontier devoid of non-indigenous settlement beyond dispersed HBC posts, the gold rush changed that with an influx of population, a change in economy, and the growth and development of infrastructure, settlements and a central government administration. The Yukon River basin had shed its identity as an exotic edge of the unknown world and emerged as a centre for resource extraction, intimately tied to the growing Canadian nation.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, *The Churchman's Missionary Atlas* (Westminster: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1912), 16.

<sup>105</sup> Bowen, "Incidents," 1.

<sup>106</sup> Coates, "World History," 29.

The changing demographics were felt especially keenly by indigenous people and, with them, the CMS. With many indigenous people displaced from their traditional territories by mining, indigenous communities did not actively participate in the new economy, but rather developed new relationships with non-indigenous people to integrate developing economic opportunities into their traditional lifestyle.<sup>107</sup> For the CMS, racial questions pointed to the segregation approach that they had employed elsewhere in the global mission field, reinforced by the entry of new church organizations into the Yukon solely for the mining population. But the split between congregations was never straightforward nor was it easy and the buildings erected during and shortly after the gold rush period show the difficulties in creating these racial separations as buildings and staff were shared; this period also marks the gradual absorption of traditional religious social services into the federal administration and the changing role for the churches within this structure as even indigenous services, notably education, were transferred to the Canadian government, with the opening of the Carcross Residential School. The place of mission in the Yukon in the 1890s was a transitional one, from the traditional understanding of the north as an indigenous frontier to a region on the cusp of integration into the Canadian federal system and its plans for northern development.

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<sup>107</sup> Ken Coates, "On the Outside in their Homeland: Native People and the Evolution of the Yukon Economy," *The Northern Review* 1, no. 1 (1988): 73-89.

## Conclusion

When missionaries entered the northern part of the North American continent in the middle of the nineteenth century, their explicit goal was to convert indigenous people to Christianity. Seeing the region in which they were entering as the “ends of the earth”, as articulated in Acts 1:8, to which the word of God must be spread and in which the power of the gospel to overcome even the most difficult of circumstances was tested, missionaries approached the north with a millenarian urgency. In doing so, they were intent on fulfilling Christ’s commandment to “make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19) by overcoming what they viewed as a sinful, un-Christian wilderness, as well as very distinctly non-religious population. This romantic view of the northern field, with its foundations in pre-existing European understandings of the Arctic as the ultimate frontier zone, fuelled rapid expansion by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries in a race to convert the north’s numerous groups of indigenous people, a goal that was made difficult by the harshness of the environment, the vastness of the territory, and

the diversity of the region's indigenous people who were not a homogenous group.

However, in contrast to other parts of the global mission field where the reception of Christianity could be lukewarm, at best, missionaries were actually very successful in this area. By the end of the nineteenth century, a significant proportion of northern indigenous people, including the Dene, the Cree and some of the Inuit, had converted to Christianity, at least nominally, taking in the missionaries' message not as empty vessels in need of revelation and teaching, but rather seeing Christianity as a faith which fitted their immediate spiritual and temporal needs and which could be adapted to suit indigenous life.

However, this was not the entirety of what missionaries desired when indigenous people converted to Christianity. Although missionaries often remarked positively of many indigenous peoples' interest in the new faith, the integration of Christian beliefs into pre-existing indigenous traditions and lifestyle was viewed by most, but not all, missionaries, as an incomplete conversion. Consistent with global trends in mission at this time, northern missionaries aimed both to convert and civilize indigenous people, that is, to change their religion and the socio-economic fabric of indigenous society. For nomadic people, as were the indigenous people who lived in northern Canada, this meant both a change in their way of life and social structure, settling them into permanent communities centred around the Victorian domestic home, and changing their economy, shifting from hunting and trading to agriculture, in order to build what

was viewed at the time as the ideal Christian society. This was the model known to evangelicals as “the Bible and the Plough” although they were not the only proponents of it. In short, evangelization was viewed as a process of wholesale societal change that radically reordered indigenous peoples’ belief systems and their way of life.

Within this framework for evangelization, architecture had a significant role to play. Civilization, although generally tied most explicitly to the growth of an agricultural economy, was also intimately linked with the built environment. Civilization was consistently seen in the creation of settled, agrarian communities where converts would live and worship together. The growth of settled communities necessarily involved buildings to fulfil the specific functions needed in Christian “civilization”, namely houses, worship spaces and schools, as well as a variety of auxiliary buildings for facilitating other activities such as farming. In this way, buildings assisted in the transformation of society by offering an alternative model to a nomadic life.

Civilization also involved the transformation of landscape and it was here that buildings, as well as agriculture, could enact another very tangible change, by subduing and taming lands that were viewed as intrinsically wild. In this sense, the Arctic was the ultimate frontier where people were understood to come in contact with the unbridled power of the natural world. Wilderness, specifically, was viewed as sinful and un-Christian and its modification through agriculture and the creation of towns and settlements was seen as

a way of bringing the landscape to completion in line with dominant Christian understandings of how Christians lived and in what context. Similarly, most nineteenth-century missionaries believed that it was difficult for Christians to live in a non-Christian environment and that “true” transformation of a society also involved the transformation of its environment.

The understanding of Christianity as a religion that took place within settlements was reinforced by the models upon which missionaries based their practice. With the notable and recognized exception of the early church in Ireland, the apostolic missions to which nineteenth-century evangelists looked were all based in an urban context. The most often cited model—Paul—developed a framework for mission which assumed that Christian society was found in settled communities which lived and worshiped together; it was this type of evangelization to which missionaries looked for guidance and precedent, particularly because they saw themselves like early evangelists entering into unknown and hostile territory to spread the word of Christ. Settled communities were also easier to evangelize because they were concentrated in one place.

The importance of building also drew of biblical precedent. Looking to the Old Testament and the settlement of the Israelites, in particular, missionaries saw a distinct connection between settled communities, with permanent architecture, and godliness. By extension, the nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle of most indigenous

people was viewed as akin to the wandering of the Israelites in the desert, a clear indication of a lack of faith. Buildings, therefore, became an integral symbolic aspect of bringing the north to Christianity and civilization, as well as providing clear, practical space for activities such as worship. Buildings marked presence and demonstrated to indigenous people the ideals of nineteenth-century European Christianity that missionaries hoped would be transmitted through both their teaching and through the buildings and environment of the mission station itself.

The mission station had a very specific role in this process. Most missionaries viewed the mission station as the nucleus of future Christian villages and it was therefore seen as central to creating these communities. However, in the early stages of mission, before the creation of settled towns, the mission station was viewed as a contact space where Christian missionaries interacted with indigenous people, inculcating them with the new ideas brought by evangelists. Within the space of the station and its buildings, missionaries entered into dialogue with indigenous people and introduced Christian teachings and values to them. However, buildings also functioned on a more intrinsic level where their design, layout and function was also intended to communicate to indigenous people ideas about Christianity and the ways in which Christians lived, such as the division of internal space within the house and its relationship to Christian sexual morals. Architecture, therefore, took on a complex and multifaceted role within the



development of Christian missions and, as part of a convert and civilize strategy, was extremely important as a site of encounter, communication and transformation.

This train of thought was present in missions throughout the globe during the nineteenth century and, unsurprisingly, was easier to implement in some places than others. The northern mission field was almost completely unsuited for this kind of societal and environmental change because its economic systems and resources could not support the immediate development of an agriculture-based settlement model. As a result, missionaries were forced to adapt their strategy to fit these needs, using architecture not as a tool to create indigenous Christian settlements, but rather as a way to modify aspects of indigenous culture to form communities of “Christian hunters” who both continued to live nomadically, and integrate some aspects of Christian civilization into their lives, including religious belief, family structure and seasonal movement patterns. Similarly, it was also understood that the wilderness was not going to be tamed, as part of the creation of a civilized, subdued landscape because it was too vast, too wild and simply not suited to a pastoral ideal. Missionaries did want indigenous people to develop permanent Christian communities eventually, and some of the skills they taught to children in schools, for example, are a testament to that, but this was seen as something that was not achievable in the short term, and was extremely unlikely to be based around agriculture. As a result, architecture was modified to suit this frontier setting, shifting the role and message of buildings and the mission station to suit

the immediate conditions of the landscape and its people. This also required navigating the unique conditions of the northern mission field, from the difficulty in recruiting staff to the sometimes-ambiguous relationship between missionaries and their European counterparts, the HBC.

Within these conditions, the mission station became a metaphorical island in the wilderness. Surrounded on all sides by seemingly-hostile landscape, it was a place where Christianity had theoretically triumphed in beating back both the physical and moral wilderness. The station, as a collection of buildings and, in some areas where feasible, gardens, was viewed as a Christian enclave where landscape and people could be transformed through the power of Christian missions. In this space, as articulated in the Turner thesis, the “civilized” and “uncivilized” worlds met and it was hoped by missionaries that the former would triumph over the latter through the inculcation of Christian ideology. This was seen to include Christian values with regards to personal behaviour and social structure which could be transmitted to and carried by indigenous converts onto the land where they might be applied, even outside the confines of the mission station. As a result of these conditions, missionaries had a tendency to focus their teaching, and therefore their buildings, on inculcating specific ideas that were realistically applicable in this context; this included things such as morality, devotional worship practice and new cycles of time where Sunday, for example, was kept as a day of rest. In this way, mission stations were intended to become hubs around which the

Christian world was based, even if it was scattered and functioned in a way radically different from the agricultural settlement model.

Although the mission station, as a modification of landscape and a place of encounter, functioned as a whole, individual buildings also played specific roles. As has been demonstrated, structures such as the house, church and school all held intrinsic functions based on the activities that took place within them as well as the architecture itself which spoke to missionary anxieties and concerns through its physical form, attempting to communicate these ideas to indigenous people. Nevertheless, the way in which missionaries approached these structures was not homogenous and varied from location to location, based on the immediate needs of the station as well as the limitations placed upon missionaries by the widely varying climate and resources available for buildings. The size of the territory, the perspectives of individual missionaries and the local circumstances in which they found themselves all contributed to how buildings were used; the approach undertaken on Blacklead Island, for example, differed sharply from that at Fortymile, despite the wider limitations and similar practice present throughout the northern field.

What is notable about this field—and the overarching importance of architecture within it—is that both Catholics and Protestants developed extremely similar strategies. Although denominationally different and virulently opposed to one another, both

organizations used architecture in the same way and based their mission practice on the same assumptions about the role of architecture in conversion and the creation of Christian society. Necessarily, there were some key differences when put into practice, notably activities within the home and the use of decorative schemes, but the emphasis on and use of architecture as a communicative, transformative medium underlines the importance placed upon it in nineteenth-century global missions as a whole and across denominational divides. Architecture, therefore, was an extremely important aspect of northern missions and was intended to function in very specific ways as a tool and an agent in evangelization bringing to indigenous people and their environment a message both of Christianity and of civilization, modified to suit the limitations of the northern field. This did not always occur; indigenous peoples' acceptance of the Christian message was not complete and different communities and individuals responded differently to the missionaries' message, meaning that the mediation that was intended to take place within these spaces could be limited. Similarly, there was little in the way of dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous groups as missionaries often ignored indigenous concerns and understandings of the Christian message as they attempted to recreate the Christian society they envisaged within the northern environment. Nevertheless, the built environment remained an integral part of how and where missionaries believed their message was communicated.

Bringing together a range of archival sources from two organizations expanding in tandem with extremely similar strategies, this thesis has responded to a clear gap in contemporary scholarship: namely, the limited amount of scholarship on the role of architecture in nineteenth-century Arctic missions. Although the role of architecture and landscape transformation as important aspects of missions has been recognized in several recent and important studies, this thesis has sought to expand upon those existing discussions by looking at the built environment in a holistic way, examining the stations as integral units and as a collection of interrelated but independent structures, recognizing that architecture, as much as agriculture or literacy, was viewed as an integral aspect of mission within the convert and civilize model. Most specifically, this study has contributed to the overall understanding of the role of architecture in mission by examining how ideas present within global missionary discourse were applied to a frontier zone that was, probably correctly, viewed as one of the most difficult mission fields in the world. As the Arctic was also a field where the dominant agricultural model was also unsuitable, this thesis has shown how missionaries adapted, or not, to the circumstances in which they found themselves, by realigning the model practiced in Red River and elsewhere to one that suited the northern environment. What can be concluded, therefore, is that missionaries viewed architecture as integral to their mission to build a Christian society, in settled and non-settled contexts, both as something that would develop alongside new Christian communities, but also as places

of contact and transformation, even if that transformation was not the cultural and religious change they ultimately hoped for within indigenous communities.



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